No 897
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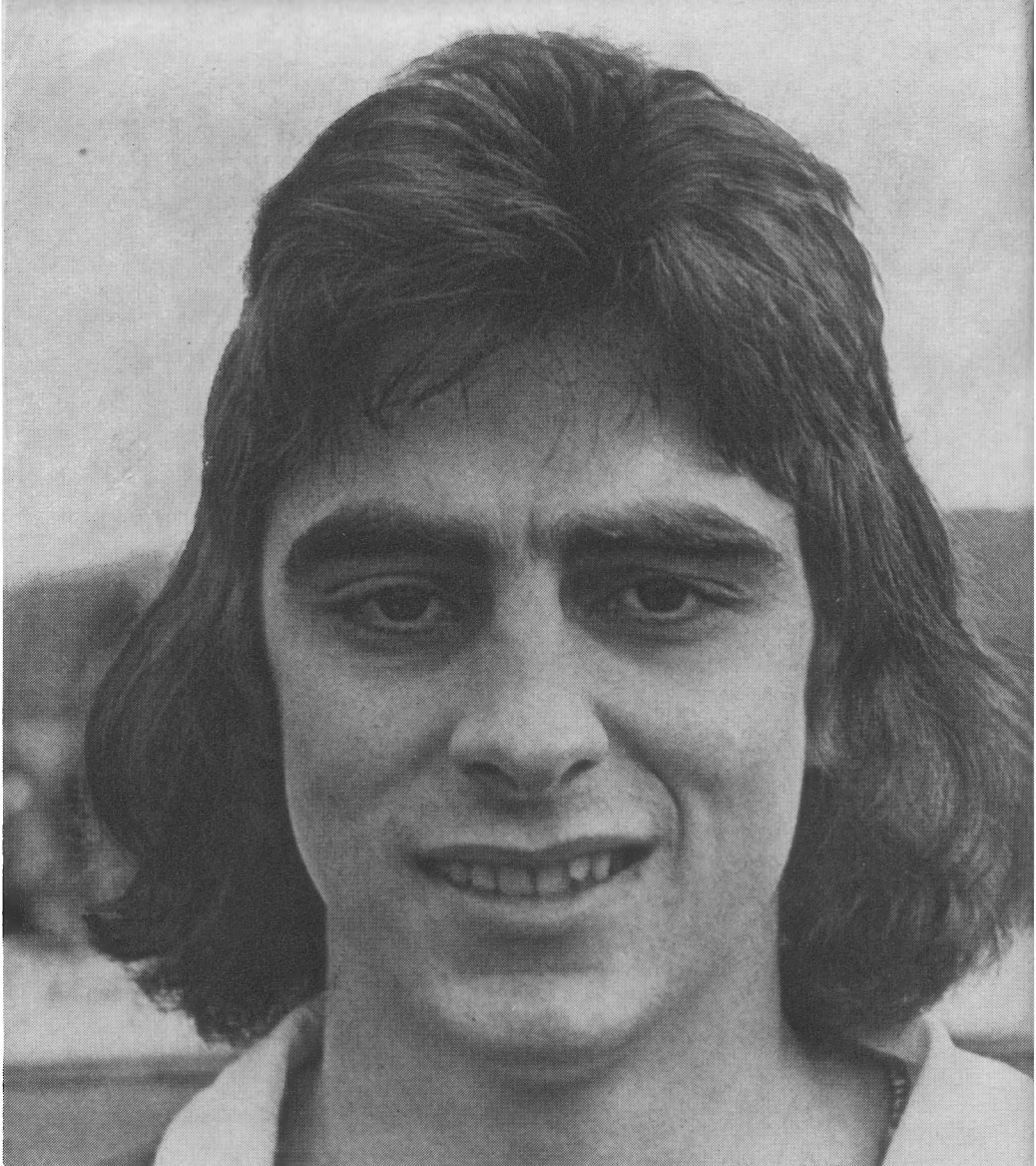
AUS. N.Z. 18c

Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES

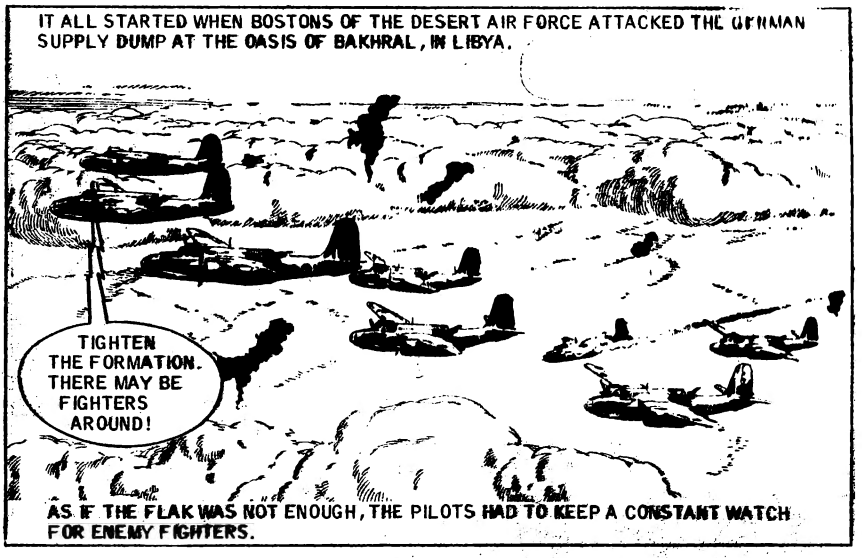
THE BLACK BUZZARD

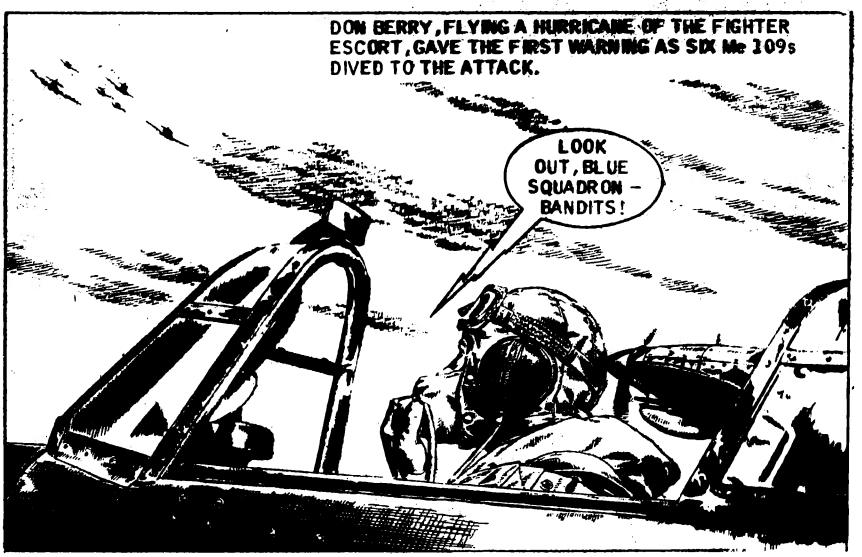


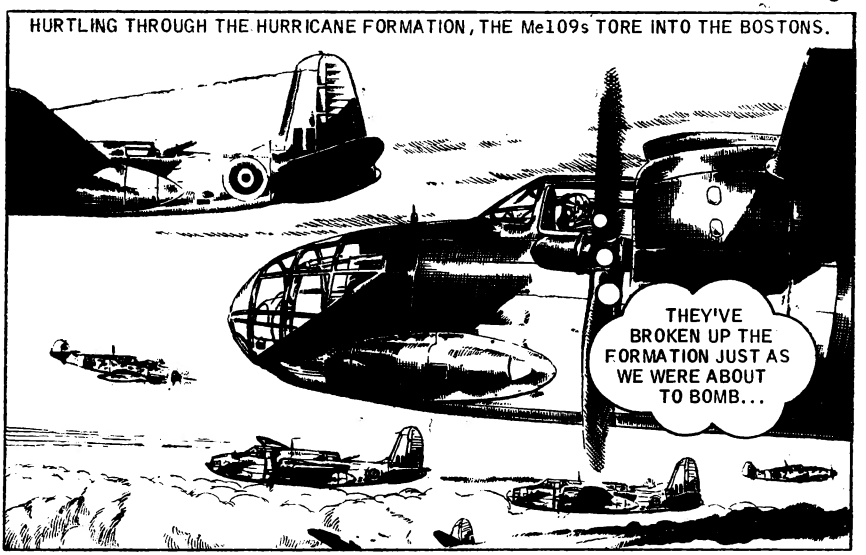
Stars of Soccer—David Smallman

THE BLACK BUZZARD

OBERST KLAUS VON REGNER WAS HATED BY THE BRITISH. HE'D EARNED HIS NICKNAME – "THE BLACK BUZZARD" – BY RUTHLESSLY BLASTING DAMAGED AND STRAGGLING AIRCRAFT FROM THE SKY TO RUN UP HIS SCORE OF KILLS. BUT THEN HE TANGLED WITH DON BERRY, HURRICANE ACE – ONE MAN WHO COULD FIGHT BACK. AND THEIR FEUD COULD ONLY END IN VICTORY FOR ONE...AND DEATH FOR THE LOSER!

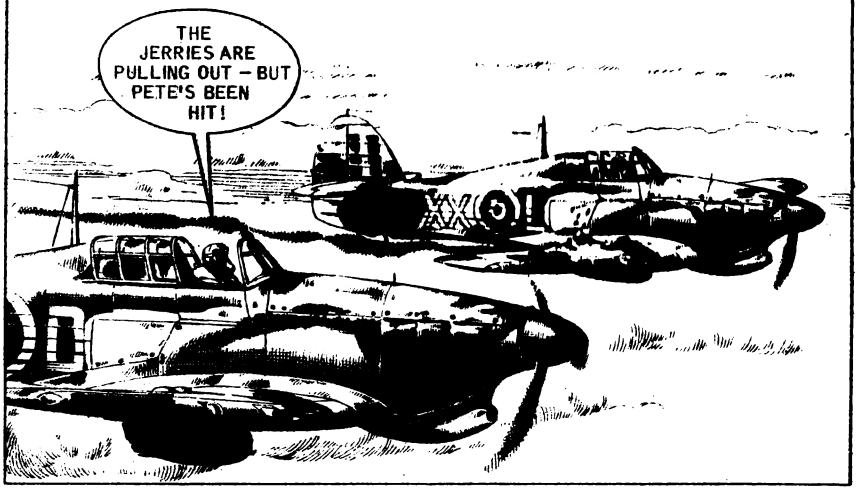

IT ALL STARTED WHEN BOSTONS OF THE DESERT AIR FORCE ATTACKED THE GERMAN SUPPLY DUMP AT THE OASIS OF BAKHRAL, IN LIBYA.
TIGHTEN THE FORMATION. THERE MAY BE FIGHTERS AROUND!
AS IF THE FLAK WAS NOT ENOUGH, THE PILOTS HAD TO KEEP A CONSTANT WATCH FOR ENEMY FIGHTERS.


DON BERRY, FLYING A HURRICANE OF THE FIGHTER ESCORT, GAVE THE FIRST WARNING AS SIX Me 109s DIVED TO THE ATTACK.
LOOK OUT, BLUE SQUADRON – BANDITS!


HURTLING THROUGH THE HURRICANE FORMATION, THE Me109s TORE INTO THE BOSTONS.
THEY'VE BROKEN UP THE FORMATION JUST AS WE WERE ABOUT TO BOMB...

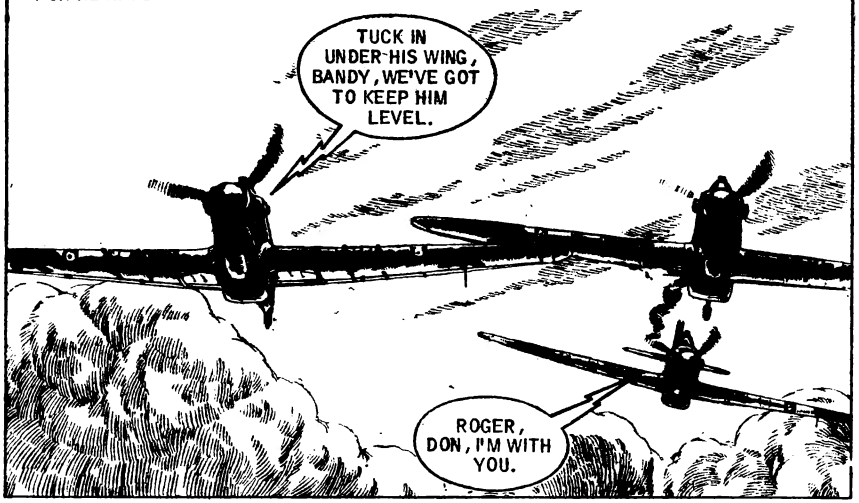
THE BOMBING WAS SCATTERED AND INEFFECTIVE, FOR OBERST VON REGNER, THE GERMAN FIGHTER COMMANDER, HAD TIMED HIS ATTACK WELL. BUT DON AND HIS BOYS RALLIED –
ALL RIGHT, JERRY, YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN – NOW IT'S OUR TURN!

THE Me109s WERE NOT STAYING TO FIGHT, AND THEY DIVED AWAY, COVERED BY THEIR OWN ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE.

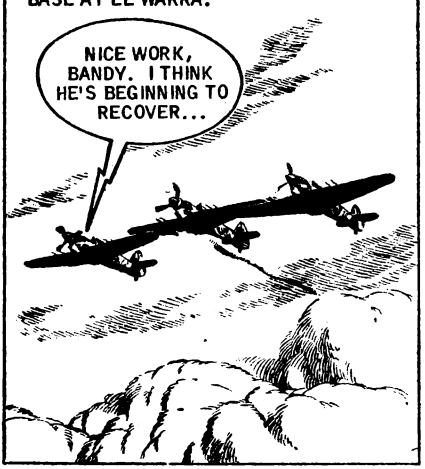


DON SHOUTED ANXIOUSLY TO HIS WING-MAN, SERGEANT PETE CORMACK, WHO APPEARED TO BE UNCONSCIOUS.

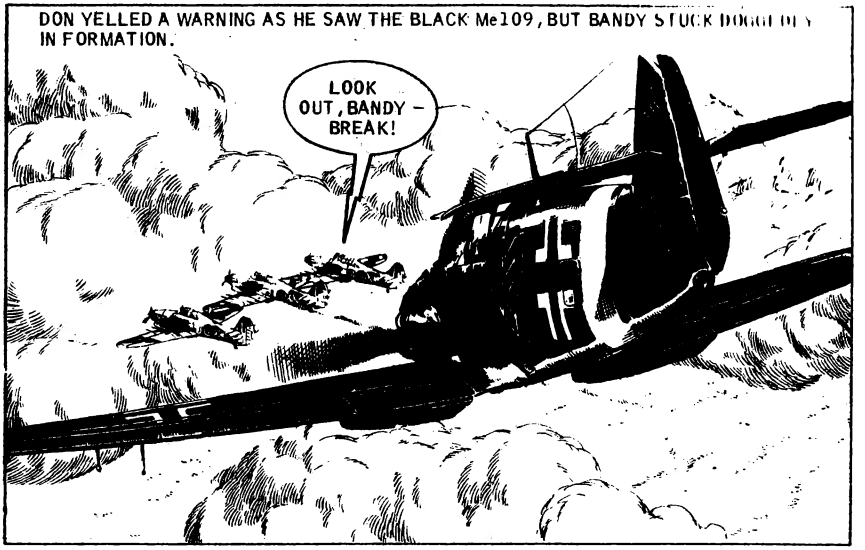
DON WAS RELIEVED TO SEE HIS MATE, PILOT OFFICER BANDY WILLIAMS, APPROACHING, FOR HE NEEDED HELP SWIFTLY.

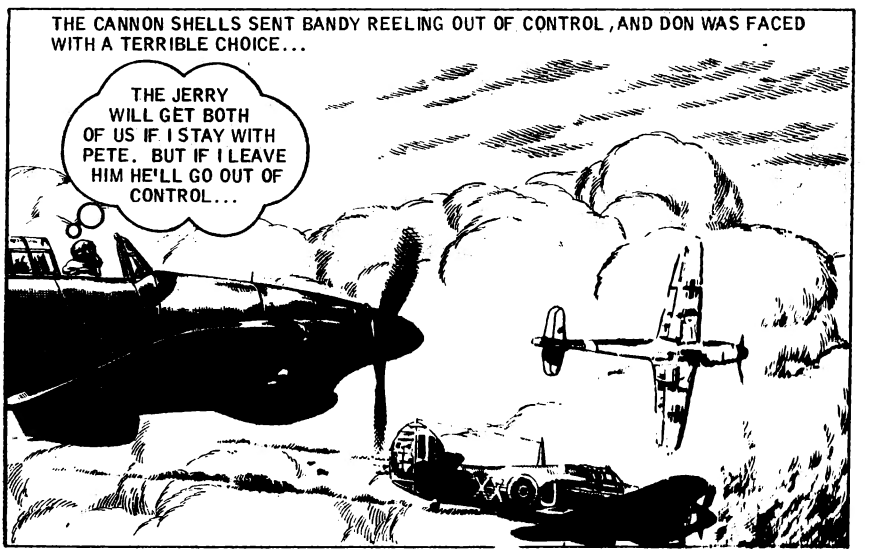


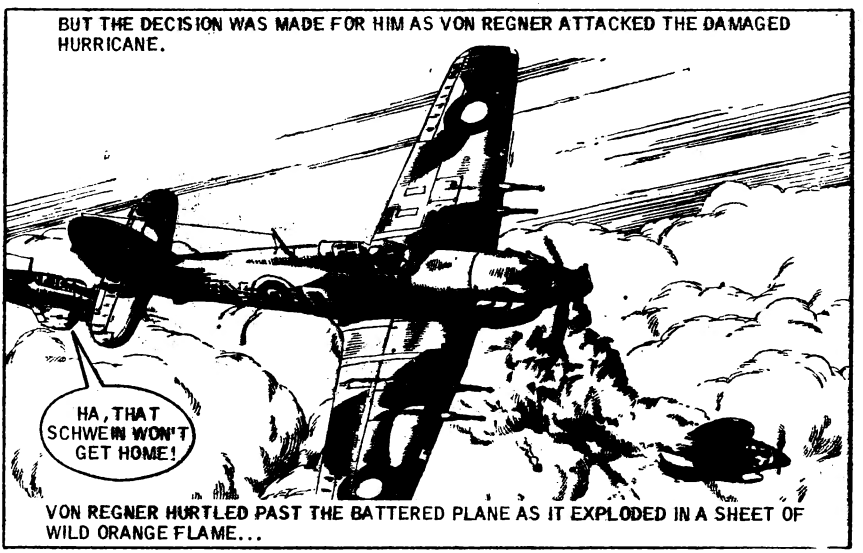
SUPPORTING THE DAMAGED HURRICANE ON THE INVISIBLE AIR CUSHION ABOVE THEIR WINGS, THEY HEADED FOR THEIR BASE AT EL WARRA.

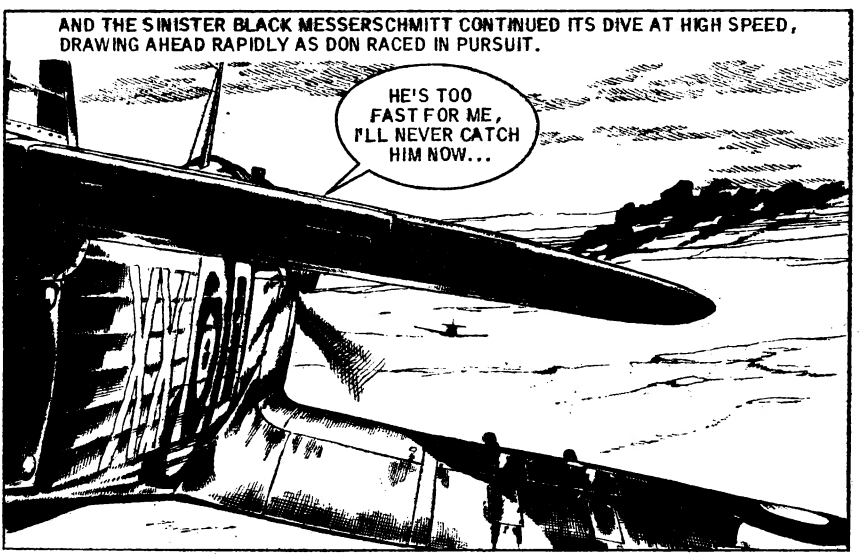


BUT THE GALLANT RESCUE BID HAD BEEN SEEN – BY OBERST VON REGNER, THE BLACK BUZZARD HIMSELF.


DON YELLED A WARNING AS HE SAW THE BLACK Me109, BUT BANDY STUCK DOGGEDLY IN FORMATION.
LOOK OUT, BANDY – BREAK!

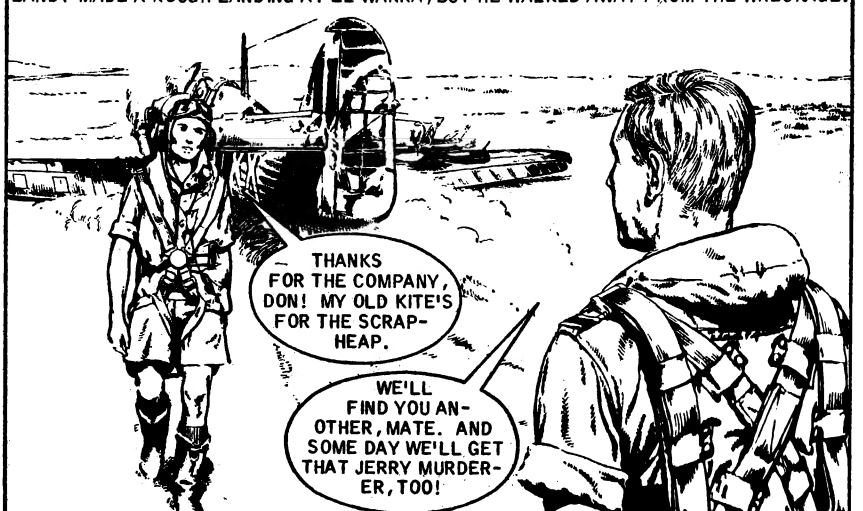

THE CANNON SHELLS SENT BANDY REELING OUT OF CONTROL, AND DON WAS FACED WITH A TERRIBLE CHOICE...
THE JERRY WILL GET BOTH OF US IF I STAY WITH PETE. BUT IF I LEAVE HIM HE'LL GO OUT OF CONTROL...

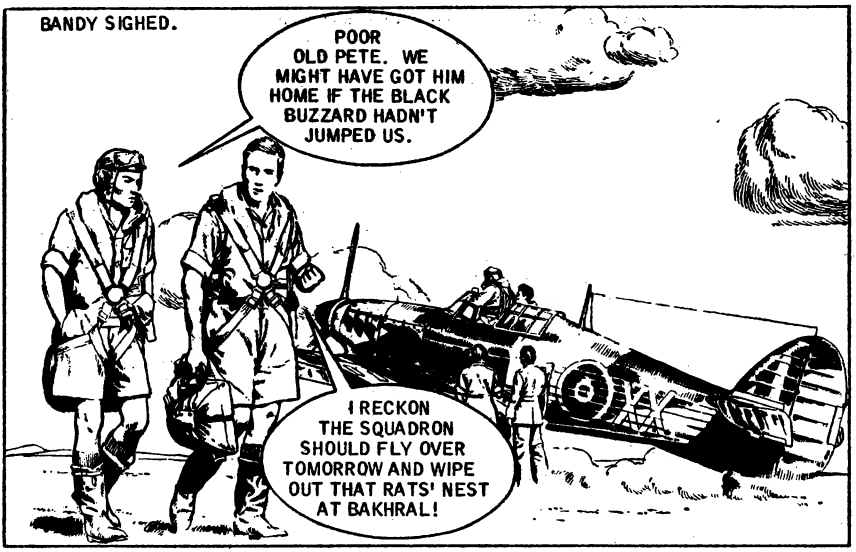

BUT THE DECISION WAS MADE FOR HIM AS VON REGNER ATTACKED THE DAMAGED HURRICANE.
HA, THAT SCHWEIN WON'T GET HOME!
VON REGNER HURTLED PAST THE BATTERED PLANE AS IT EXPLODED IN A SHEET OF WILD ORANGE FLAME...

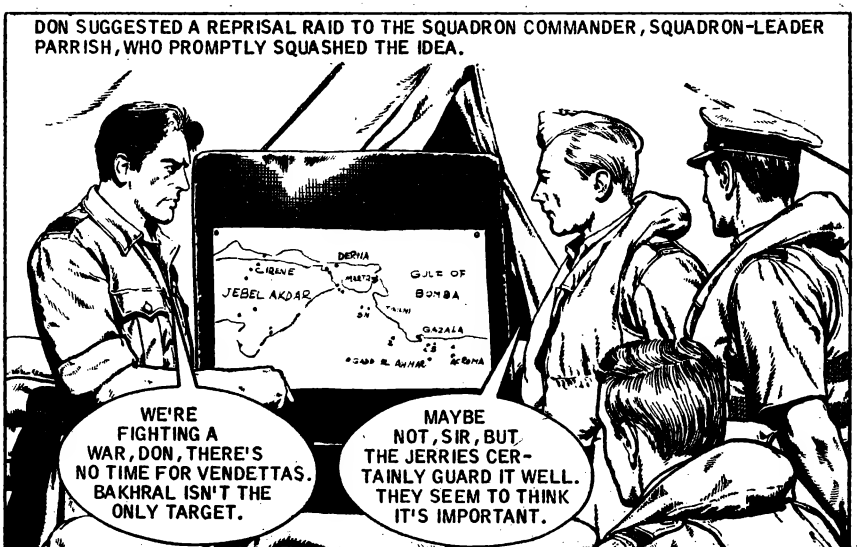

AND THE SINISTER BLACK MESSERSCHMITT CONTINUED ITS DIVE AT HIGH SPEED, DRAWING AHEAD RAPIDLY AS DON RACED IN PURSUIT.
HE'S TOO FAST FOR ME, I'LL NEVER CATCH HIM NOW...

HE RETURNED SADLY TO ESCORT BANDY, WHO WAS NURSING HIS BADLY DAMAGED HURRICANE.

BANDY MADE A ROUGH LANDING AT EL WARRA, BUT HE WALKED AWAY FROM THE WRECKAGE.


— THANKS FOR THE COMPANY, DON! MY OLD KITE'S FOR THE SCRAP-HEAP.
WE'LL FIND YOU AN-OTHER, MATE. AND SOME DAY WE'LL GET THAT JERRY MURDER-ER, TOO!


BANDY SIGHED.
POOR OLD PETE. WE MIGHT HAVE GOT HIM HOME IF THE BLACK BUZZARD HADN'T JUMPED US.
I RECKON THE SQUADRON SHOULD FLY OVER TOMORROW AND WIPE OUT THAT RATS' NEST AT BAKHRAL!


DON SUGGESTED A REPRISAL RAID TO THE SQUADRON COMMANDER, SQUADRON-LEADER PARRISH, WHO PROMPTLY SQUASHED THE IDEA.
DERNA
CIRENE
MARTUBA
GULF OF BOMBA
JEBEL AKDAR
TAUNI
GAZALA
ACROMA
WE'RE FIGHTING A WAR, DON, THERE'S NO TIME FOR VENDETTAS. BAKHRAL ISN'T THE ONLY TARGET.
MAYBE NOT, SIR, BUT THE JERRIES CERTAINLY GUARD IT WELL. THEY SEEM TO THINK IT'S IMPORTANT.

DON WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO BE CURIOUS ABOUT BAKHRAL. FOR ALTHOUGH IT WAS AN ORDINARY SUPPLY DEPOT, THE GERMANS DEFENDED IT WITH SURPRISING VIGOUR. AT THAT MOMENT A PATROL OF THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP WAS SETTING OUT TO PROBE ITS SECRETS.

AFTER THE DE-BRIEFING, PARRISH CALLED DON ASIDE AND REPEATED HIS WARNING.

I KNOW YOU'VE A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE BLACK BUZZARD, DON. BUT OUR JOB IS ESCORTING BOMBERS – NOT FIGHTING PRIVATE DUELS!

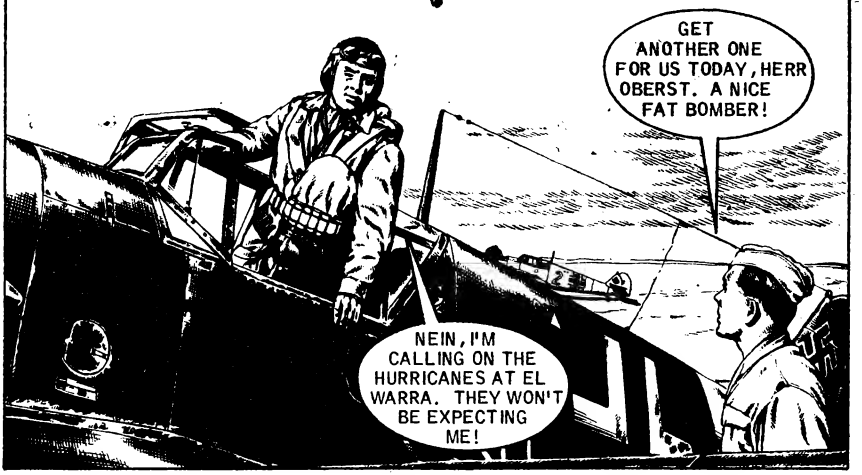
OK, SIR. I'LL STICK TO THE RULES, DON'T WORRY.

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE SQUADRON WAS ON REST. ONLY TRAINING FLIGHTS WERE CARRIED OUT – AND THOSE BY THE MOST NEWLY-JOINED PILOTS.

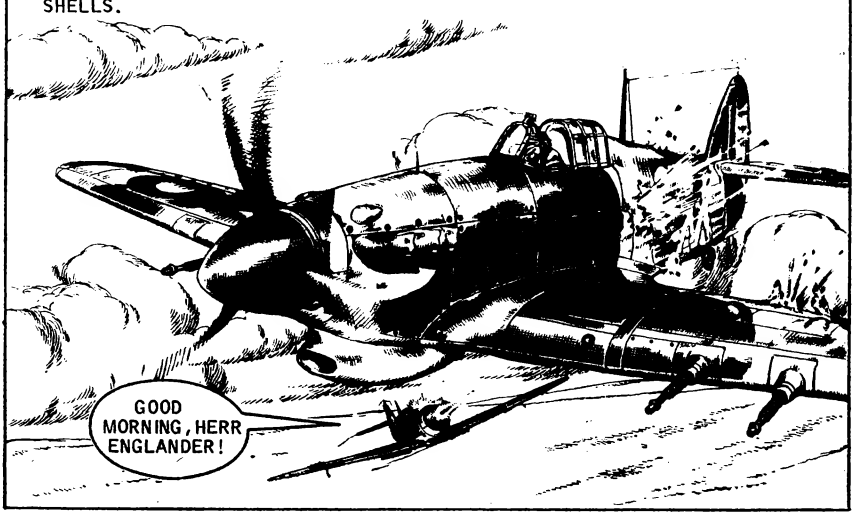
WHO'D BE A NEW BOY, DON? IT'S TOO HOT TO PRACTISE CIRCUITS AND LANDINGS TODAY.

THEY'VE GOT TO GET USED TO THE DESERT, BANDY. THEY'LL BE ON OPS WITH US NEXT WEEK.

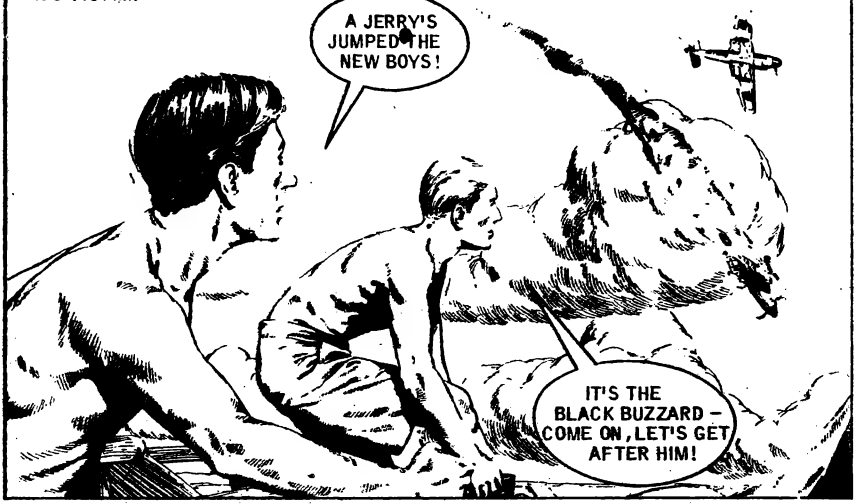
THERE WAS MORE ACTIVITY AT BAKHRAL THOUGH, FOR VON REGNER WAS EAGER TO INCREASE HIS SCORE.


GET ANOTHER ONE FOR US TODAY, HERR OBERST. A NICE FAT BOMBER!
NEIN, I'M CALLING ON THE HURRICANES AT EL WARRA. THEY WON'T BE EXPECTING ME!

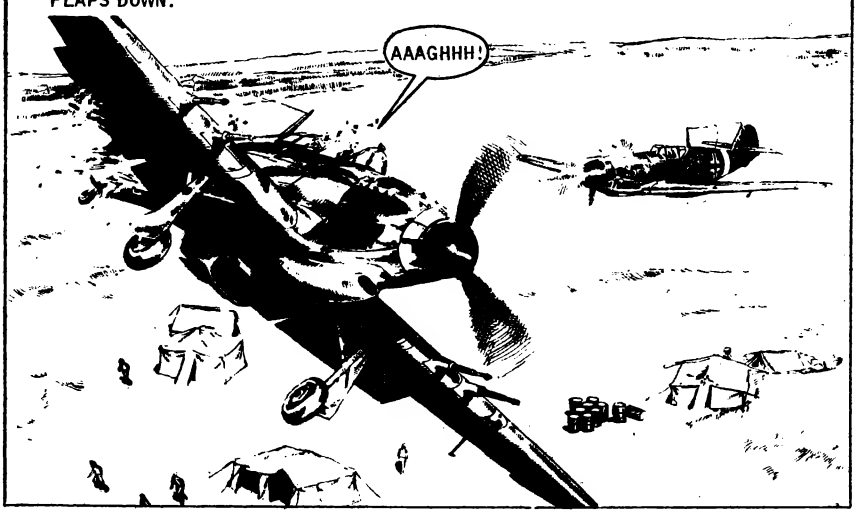
AND TRUE ENOUGH, THE FIRST WARNING OF HIS PRESENCE WAS A STREAM OF CANNON SHELLS.

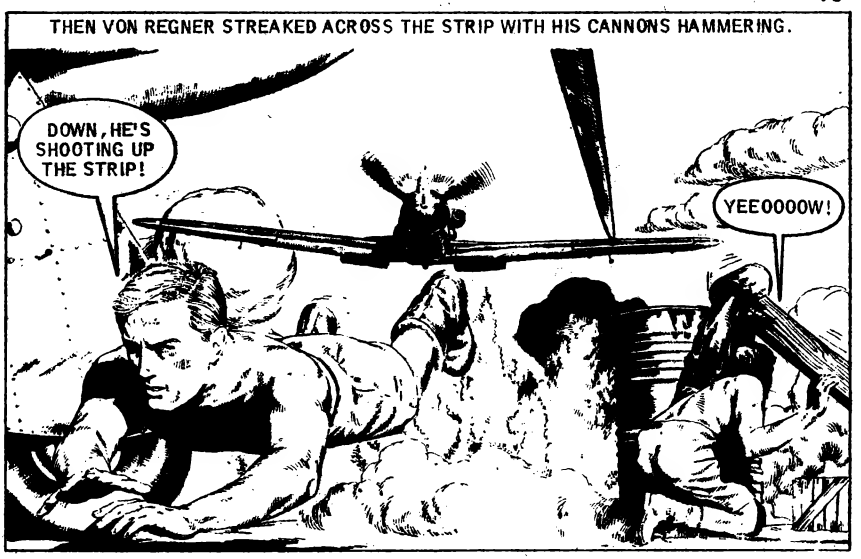


DON AND HIS COMPANIONS WATCHED HELPLESSLY AS THE BLACK Me109 DESTROYED ITS VICTIM.



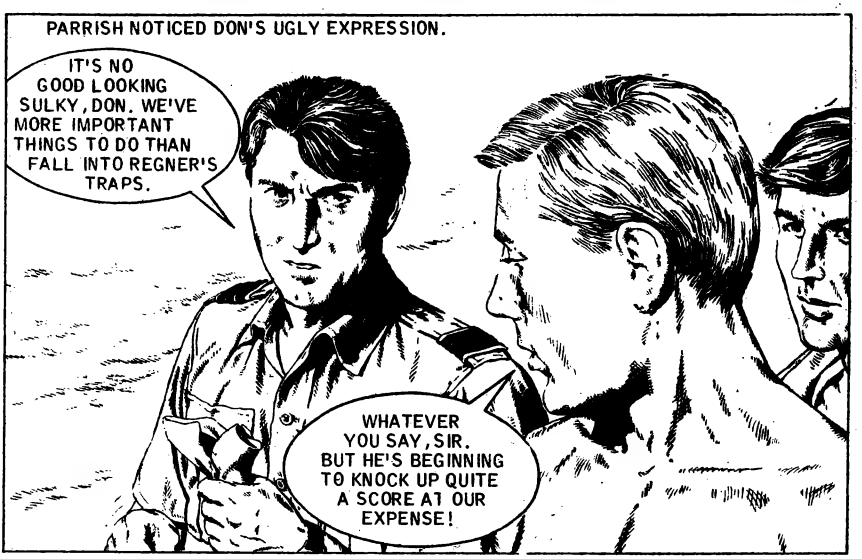
THE SECOND YOUNG PILOT STOOD NO CHANCE AS HE BANKED WITH HIS WHEELS AND FLAPS DOWN.




THEN VON REGNER STREAKED ACROSS THE STRIP WITH HIS CANNONS HAMMERING.
DOWN, HE'S SHOOTING UP THE STRIP!
YEEOOOOW!

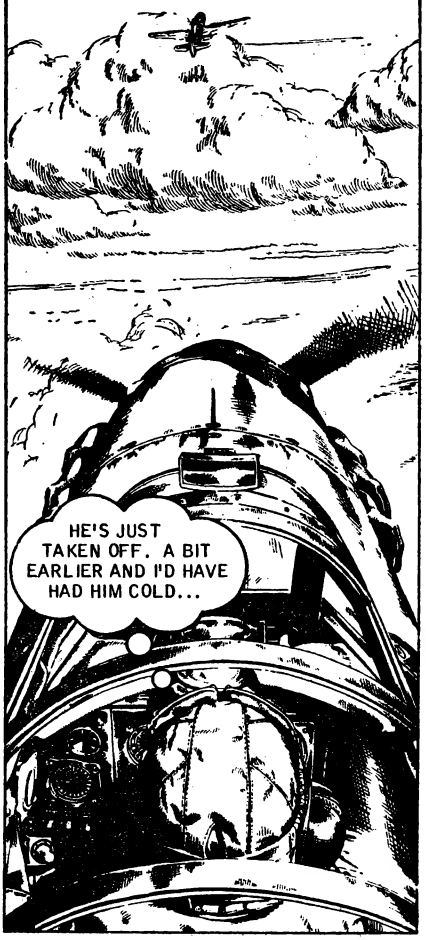
THE NAZI MADE HIS ESCAPE AT LOW LEVEL, LEAVING BEHIND A SCENE OF ANGRY CONFUSION.
HUH, JUST MY LUCK TO DIVE INTO A CAN OF SUMP OIL!
LOOK, HE DROPPED THIS, SIR – IT'S A MESSAGE, I RECKON.

IT WAS A CHALLENGE – AN OFFER TO MEET ANY HURRICANE PILOT IN SINGLE COMBAT.
HE WANTS ONE OF US TO MEET HIM OVER BAKHRAL, SO I RECKON WE SHOULD TAKE HIM ON.
AND FLY INTO A TRAP? DON'T BE A FOOL, THAT'S JUST WHAT HE WANTS.

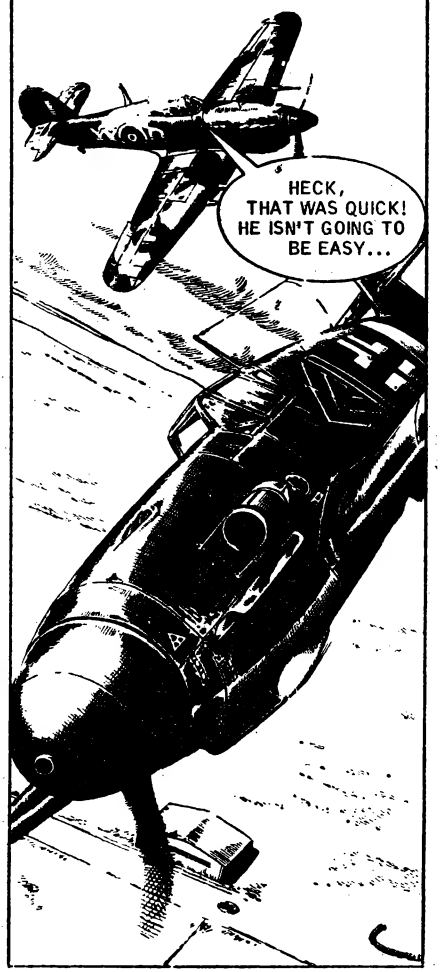

PARRISH NOTICED DON'S UGLY EXPRESSION.
IT'S NO GOOD LOOKING SULKY, DON. WE'VE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN FALL INTO REGNER'S TRAPS.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, SIR. BUT HE'S BEGINNING TO KNOCK UP QUITE A SCORE AT OUR EXPENSE!

BUT DON DID NOT FORGET THE CHALLENGE, AND THAT NIGHT HE CONFIDED IN BANDY.
TOMORROW I'M GOING TO BAKHRAL TO HAMMER THAT BIG-MOUTH JERRY!
YOU'RE CRAZY! EVEN IF THE JERRIES DON'T GET YOU, PARRISH WILL.
NOBODY'S ASKING YOU TO HELP! SO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, OK?
NO NEED TO GET HOT UNDER THE COLLAR. IF YOU WANT TO COMMIT SUICIDE THAT'S YOUR AFFAIR!
THE FOLLOWING MORNING DON TOOK OFF EARLY ON AN AIR TEST — AND HEADED SECRETLY FOR BAKHRAL.
IF I NIP IN AT LOW LEVEL I MIGHT TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE.

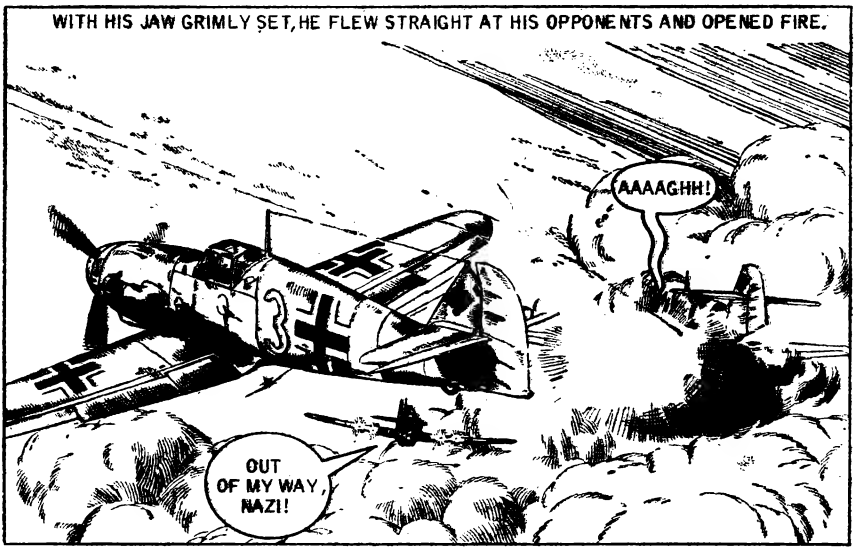
THE FLAK GUNNERS WERE ALERT AT BAKHRAL, BUT AS THEY OPENED FIRE DON SAW HIS HATED ENEMY.



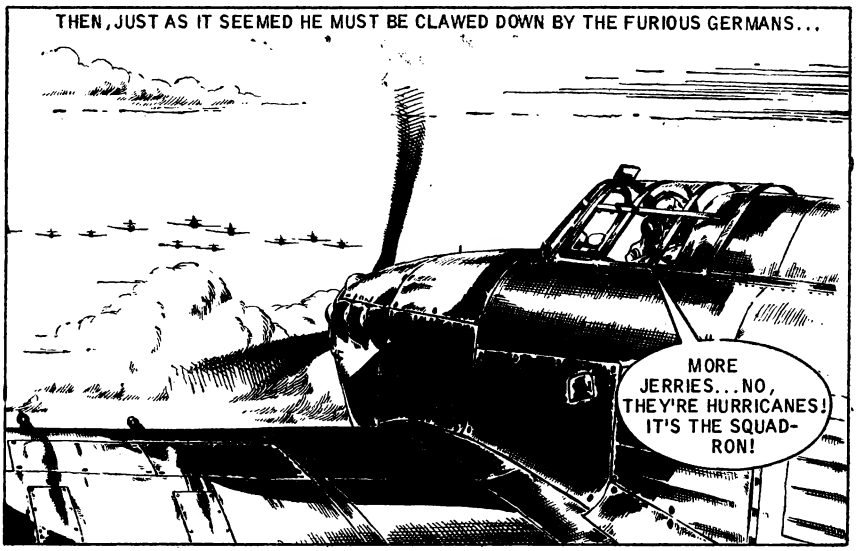
WARNED BY THE FLAK, THE CRAFTY GERMAN FLICKED INTO A VERTICAL TURN AS DON OPENED FIRE.

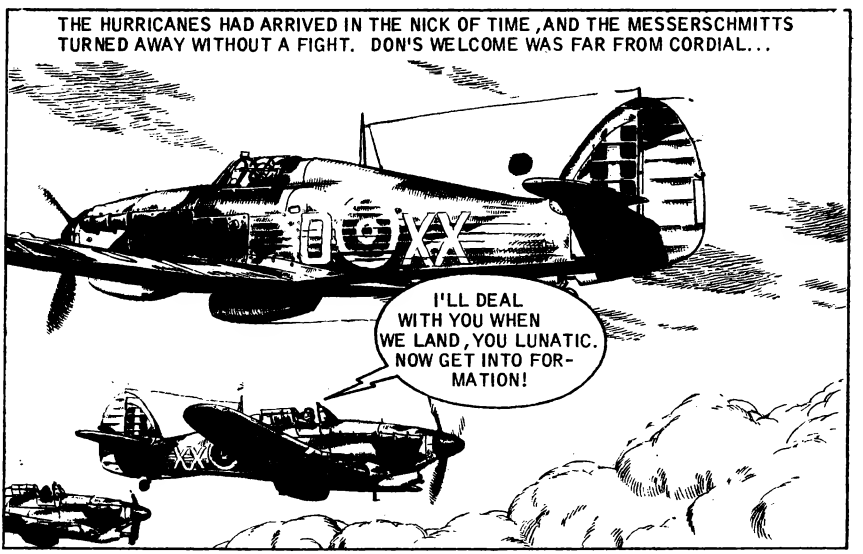


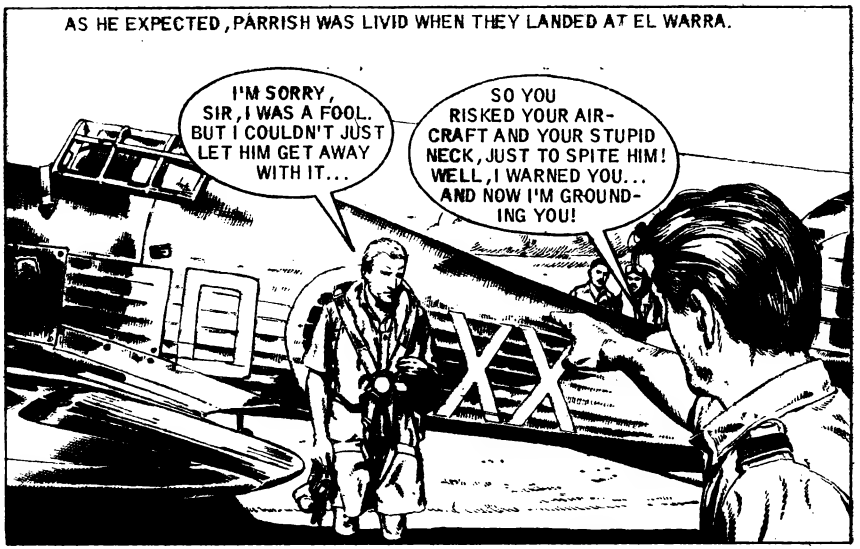
IT WAS A DUEL BETWEEN EXPERTS, AND NEITHER MAN GAINED AN INCH AS THEY CIRCLED FURIOUSLY.
HIMMEL, THIS ONE'S NO BEGINNER. BUT HE'S GOING TO GET A SURPRISE!
BUT DON, LIKE THE ACE PILOT HE WAS, GLANCED AT HIS REAR-VIEW MIRROR...
THE DIRTY RAT – HIS PALS WERE WAITING TO JUMP ME!
HE BROKE AWAY DESPERATELY, BUT AS HE CLIMBED AWAY HE SAW ANOTHER ENEMY FORMATION.
OH, NO – THERE'S ANOTHER BUNCH IN POSITION TO CUT OFF MY RETREAT!

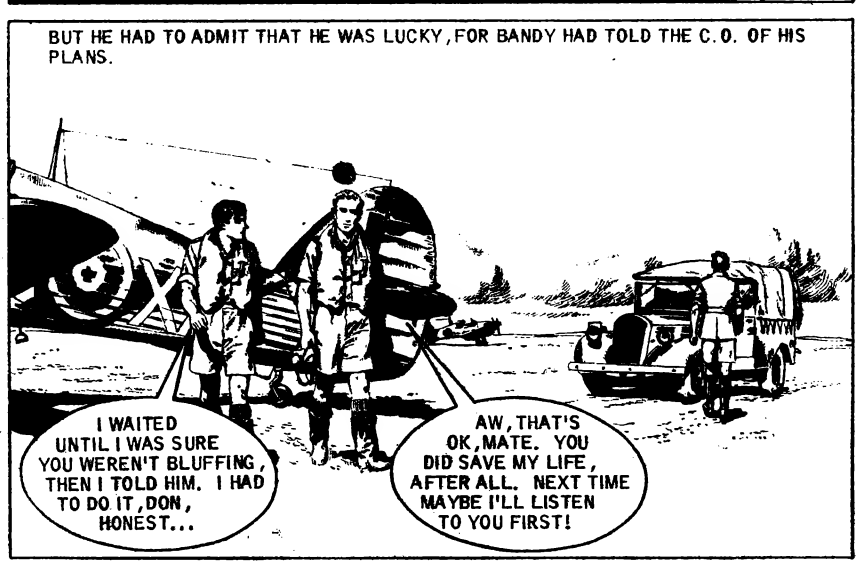

WITH HIS JAW GRIMLY SET, HE FLEW STRAIGHT AT HIS OPPONENTS AND OPENED FIRE.
AAAAGHH!
OUT OF MY WAY, NAZI!

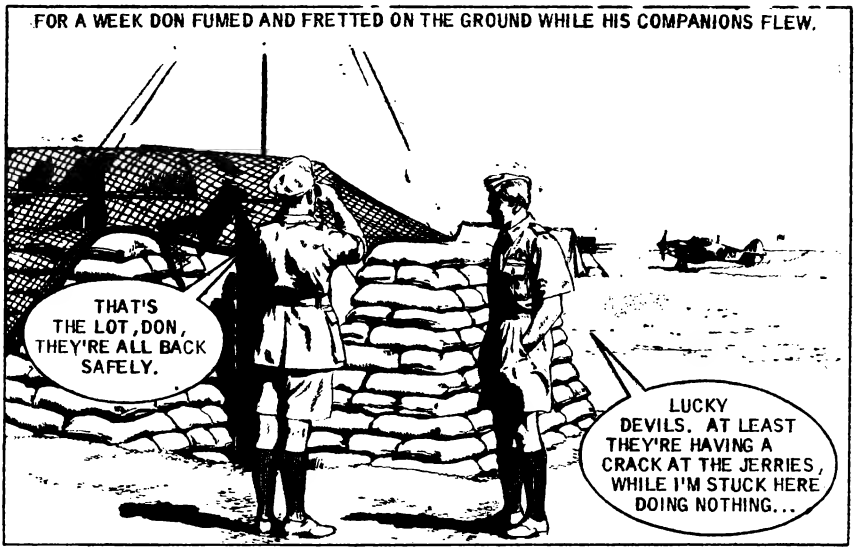
AT FULL THROTTLE, WITH HIS ENGINE OVERHEATING, HE HEADED FOR HOME.
BANDY WAS RIGHT, I WAS CRAZY TO GET INTO THIS MESS. AND ONLY A MIRACLE WILL GET ME OUT...


THEN, JUST AS IT SEEMED HE MUST BE CLAWED DOWN BY THE FURIOUS GERMANS...
MORE JERRIES... NO, THEY'RE HURRICANES! IT'S THE SQUAD-RON!


THE HURRICANES HAD ARRIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME, AND THE MESSERSCHMITTS TURNED AWAY WITHOUT A FIGHT. DON'S WELCOME WAS FAR FROM CORDIAL...
I'LL DEAL WITH YOU WHEN WE LAND, YOU LUNATIC. NOW GET INTO FOR-MATION!

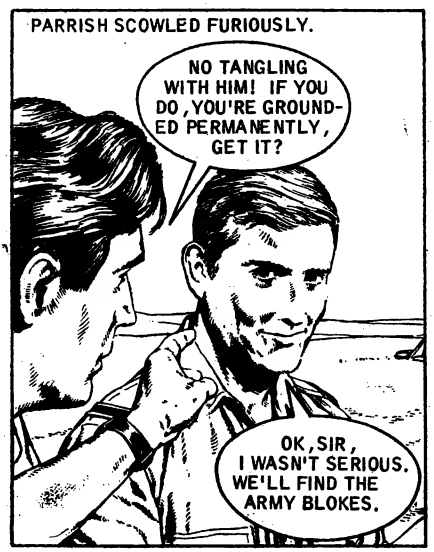

AS HE EXPECTED, PARRISH WAS LIVID WHEN THEY LANDED AT EL WARRA.
I'M SORRY, SIR, I WAS A FOOL. BUT I COULDN'T JUST LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT...
SO YOU RISKED YOUR AIR-CRAFT AND YOUR STUPID NECK, JUST TO SPITE HIM! WELL, I WARNED YOU... AND NOW I'M GROUND-ING YOU!


BUT HE HAD TO ADMIT THAT HE WAS LUCKY, FOR BANDY HAD TOLD THE C.O. OF HIS PLANS.
I WAITED UNTIL I WAS SURE YOU WEREN'T BLUFFING, THEN I TOLD HIM. I HAD TO DO IT, DON, HONEST...
AW, THAT'S OK, MATE. YOU DID SAVE MY LIFE, AFTER ALL. NEXT TIME MAYBE I'LL LISTEN TO YOU FIRST!


FOR A WEEK DON FUMED AND FRETTED ON THE GROUND WHILE HIS COMPANIONS FLEW.
THAT'S THE LOT, DON, THEY'RE ALL BACK SAFELY.
LUCKY DEVILS. AT LEAST THEY'RE HAVING A CRACK AT THE JERRIES, WHILE I'M STUCK HERE DOING NOTHING...

EVEN WHEN PARRISH RELENTED A LITTLE, DON WAS STILL GIVEN ALL THE HACK JOBS.
FERRYING NEW KITES FROM CAIRO – HUH, I MIGHT AS WELL BE A BUS DRIVER!
NEVER MIND, THE C.O. WANTS TO SEE YOU. HE'S GOT A JOB FOR US, AND IT ISN'T FERRY-WORK.

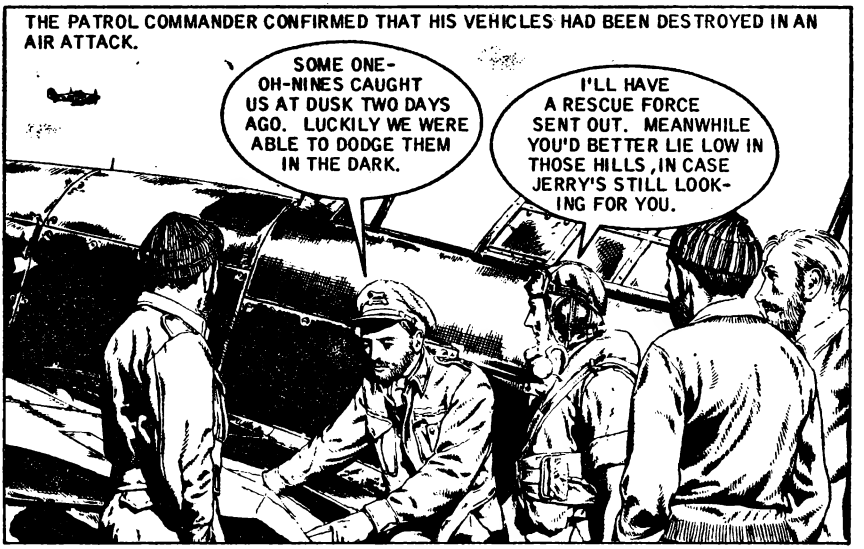
IT WAS A SIMPLE OPERATION, BUT EVEN DON HAD TO ADMIT IT WAS BETTER THAN FERRY TRIPS FROM CAIRO.
THE ARMY PATROL THAT WAS SENT TO BAKHRAL HAS LOST RADIO CONTACT, AND WE'VE GOT TO FIND THEM. TAKE BANDY WITH YOU, AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLE!
BAKHRAL? MAYBE THE BLACK BUZZARD WILL BE HANGING AROUND!

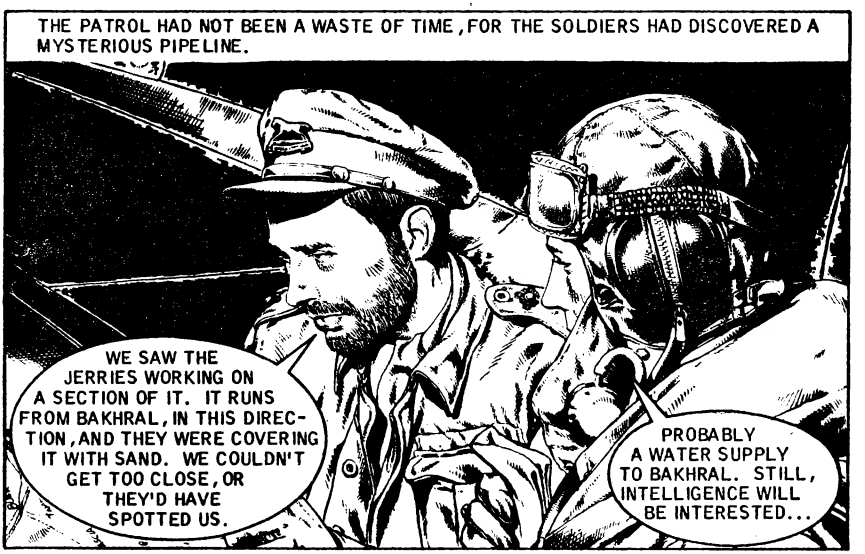

PARRISH SCOWLED FURIOUSLY.
NO TANGLING WITH HIM! IF YOU DO, YOU'RE GROUNDED PERMANENTLY, GET IT?
OK, SIR, I WASN'T SERIOUS. WE'LL FIND THE ARMY BLOKES.

THE SOLDIERS HAD A RADIO WITH THEM, AND THERE WAS A CHANCE THAT EVEN IF IT WAS DAMAGED THEY COULD STILL CONTACT A NEAR-BY AIRCRAFT. SO DON AND BANDY SET OUT, TRANSMITTING AT INTERVALS ON THE ARMY WAVELENGTH.
YEAH, THEY'RE OURS OK.

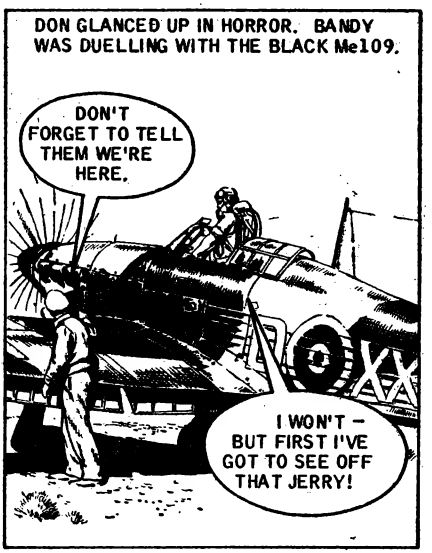
THE SIGNAL HAD BEEN VERY WEAK AND THEY HAD TAKEN A LONG TIME TO HOME IN ON THE SOLDIERS.
RECEPTION'S TERRIBLE, BUT I CAN SEE THEM. THEY'RE ON A LEVEL STRETCH, SO I'LL LAND AND TALK TO THEM.

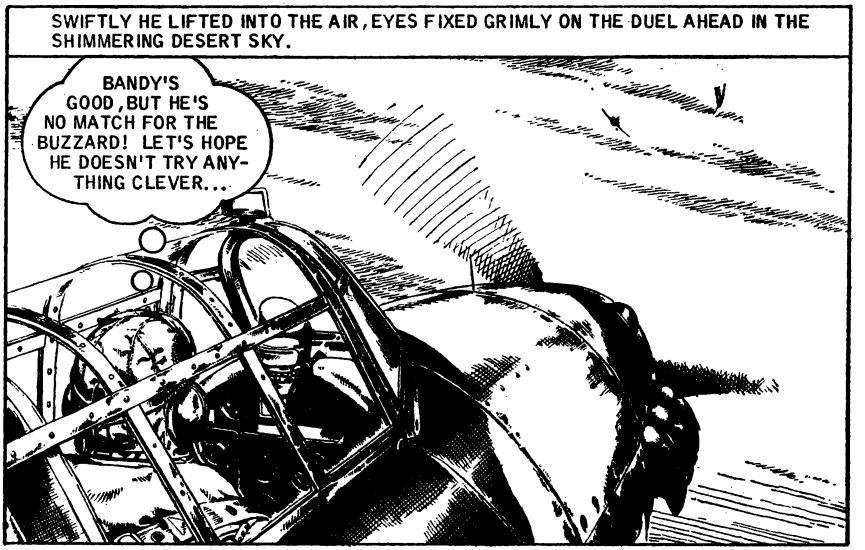
LEAVING BANDY ON GUARD ABOVE HIM, DON LANDED GENTLY BESIDE THE PATROL.
LOOKS AS IF THEY'VE LOST THEIR TRANSPORT. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN IN A SCRAP!

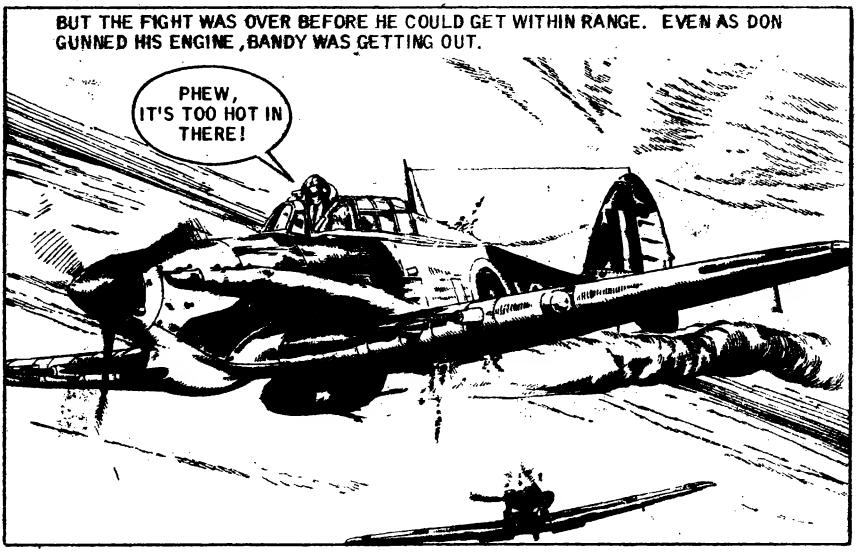

THE PATROL COMMANDER CONFIRMED THAT HIS VEHICLES HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN AN AIR ATTACK.
SOME ONE-OH-NINES CAUGHT US AT DUSK TWO DAYS AGO. LUCKILY WE WERE ABLE TO DODGE THEM IN THE DARK.
I'LL HAVE A RESCUE FORCE SENT OUT. MEANWHILE YOU'D BETTER LIE LOW IN THOSE HILLS, IN CASE JERRY'S STILL LOOKING FOR YOU.

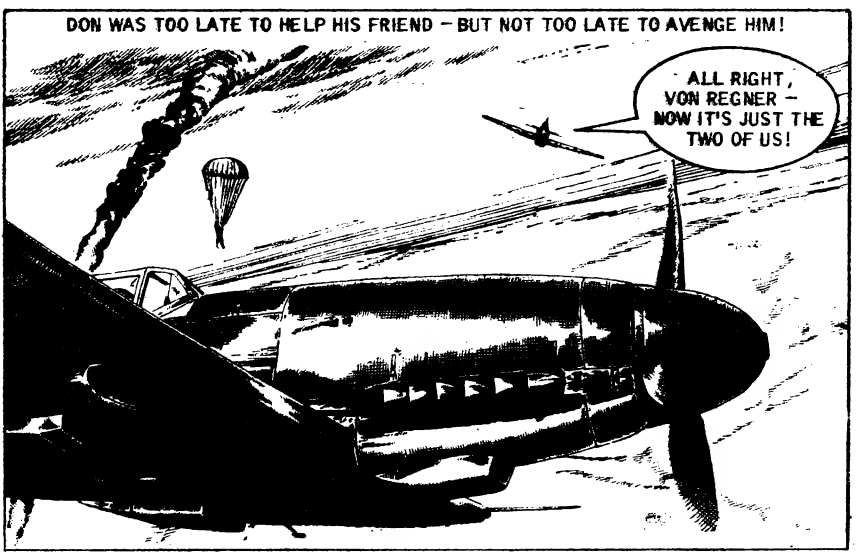

THE PATROL HAD NOT BEEN A WASTE OF TIME, FOR THE SOLDIERS HAD DISCOVERED A MYSTERIOUS PIPELINE.
WE SAW THE JERRIES WORKING ON A SECTION OF IT. IT RUNS FROM BAKHRAL, IN THIS DIRECTION, AND THEY WERE COVERING IT WITH SAND. WE COULDN'T GET TOO CLOSE, OR THEY'D HAVE SPOTTED US.
PROBABLY A WATER SUPPLY TO BAKHRAL. STILL, INTELLIGENCE WILL BE INTERESTED...

AND AS HE MARKED THE PIPELINE ON HIS MAP...
BLIMEY, SIR, LOOKS AS IF YOUR PAL'S IN TROUBLE! THERE'S A JERRY AFTER HIM!

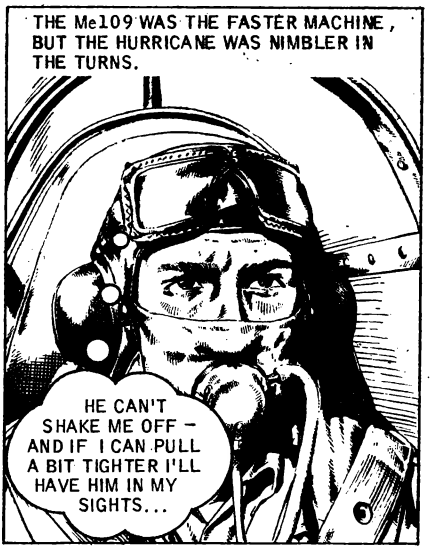

DON GLANCED UP IN HORROR. BANDY WAS DUELLING WITH THE BLACK Me109.
DON'T FORGET TO TELL THEM WE'RE HERE.
I WON'T — BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO SEE OFF THAT JERRY!

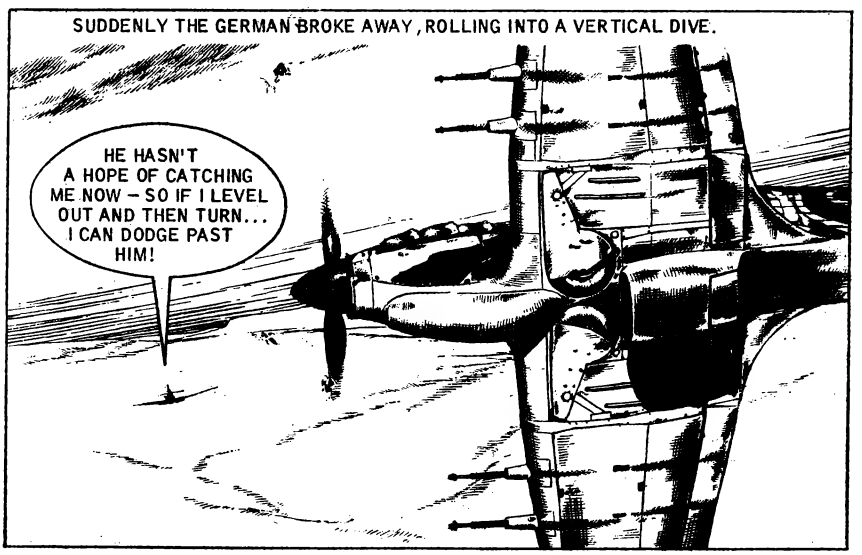

SWIFTLY HE LIFTED INTO THE AIR, EYES FIXED GRIMLY ON THE DUEL AHEAD IN THE SHIMMERING DESERT SKY.
BANDY'S GOOD, BUT HE'S NO MATCH FOR THE BUZZARD! LET'S HOPE HE DOESN'T TRY ANY-THING CLEVER...

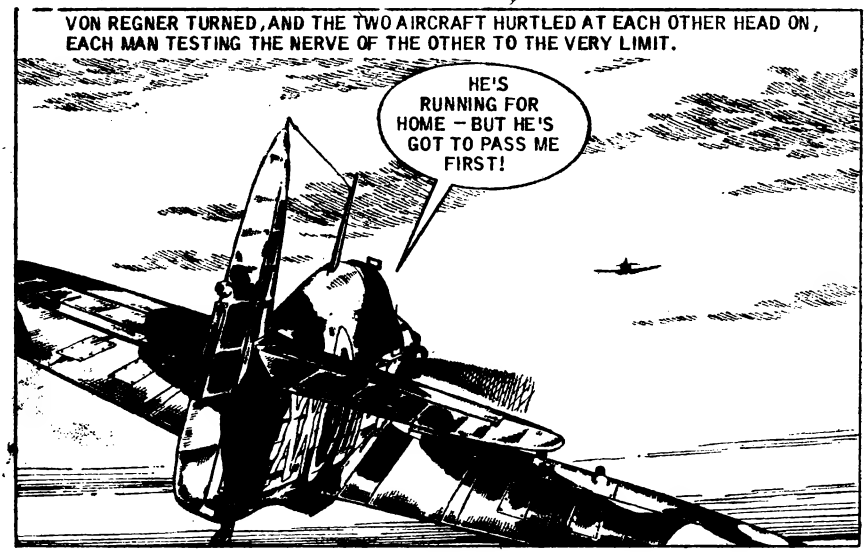

BUT THE FIGHT WAS OVER BEFORE HE COULD GET WITHIN RANGE. EVEN AS DON GUNNED HIS ENGINE, BANDY WAS GETTING OUT.
PHEW, IT'S TOO HOT IN THERE!


DON WAS TOO LATE TO HELP HIS FRIEND – BUT NOT TOO LATE TO AVENGE HIM!
ALL RIGHT, VON REGNER – NOW IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US!

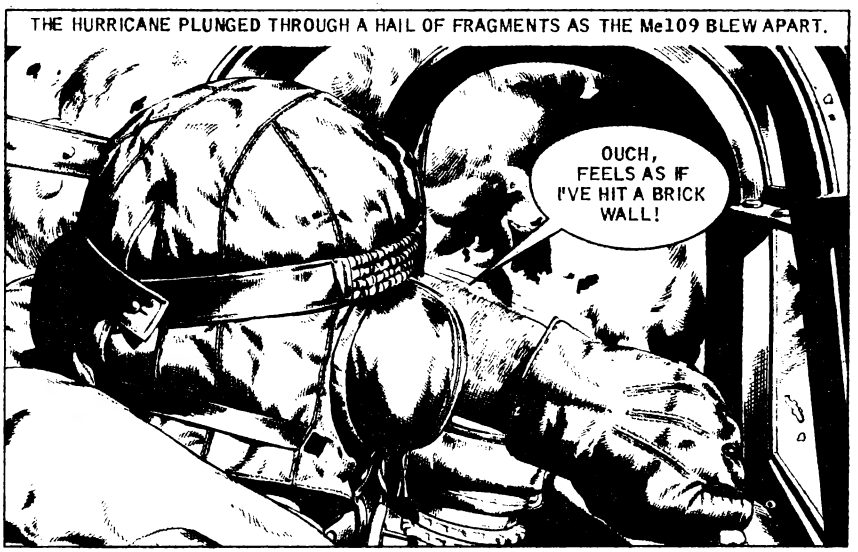
ACH, HE'S BETWEEN ME AND MY BASE. I SHALL HAVE TO FIGHT... BUT IT WON'T TAKE LONG!

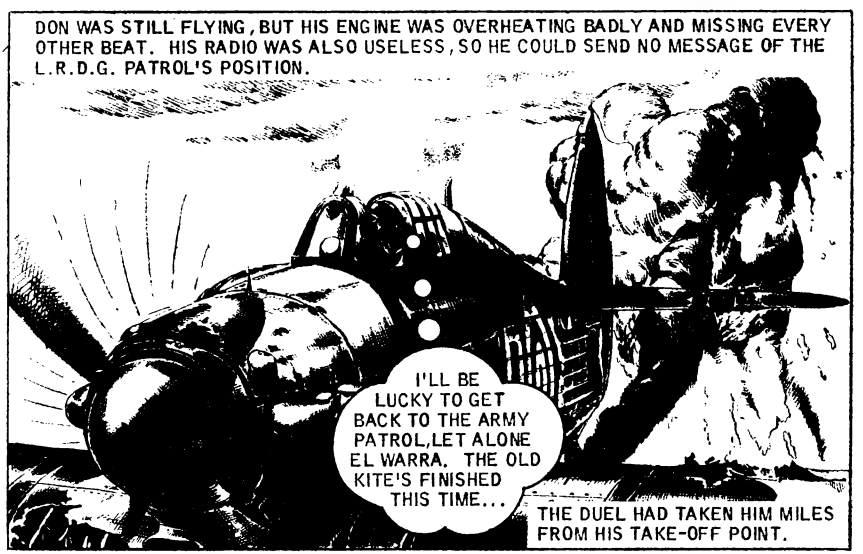

THE Me109 WAS THE FASTER MACHINE, BUT THE HURRICANE WAS NIMBLER IN THE TURNS.
HE CAN'T SHAKE ME OFF – AND IF I CAN PULL A BIT TIGHTER I'LL HAVE HIM IN MY SIGHTS...


SUDDENLY THE GERMAN BROKE AWAY, ROLLING INTO A VERTICAL DIVE.
HE HASN'T A HOPE OF CATCHING ME NOW – SO IF I LEVEL OUT AND THEN TURN... I CAN DODGE PAST HIM!

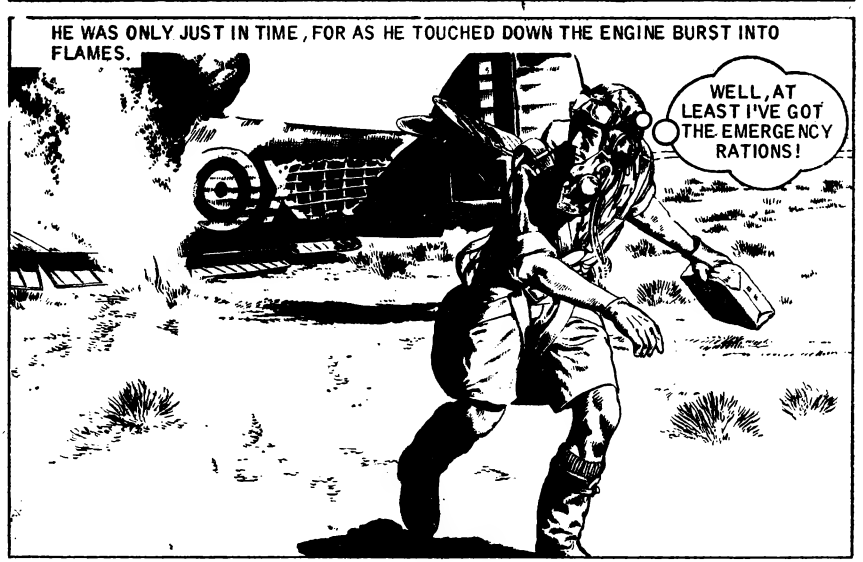

VON REGNER TURNED, AND THE TWO AIRCRAFT HURTLED AT EACH OTHER HEAD ON, EACH MAN TESTING THE NERVE OF THE OTHER TO THE VERY LIMIT.
HE'S RUNNING FOR HOME — BUT HE'S GOT TO PASS ME FIRST!

AS THE BLACK Me109 LOOMED GIGANTIC IN HIS SIGHTS, DON HELD HIS COURSE AND OPENED FIRE. IT TOOK VON REGNER LESS THAN TWO SECONDS TO GET THE MESSAGE TO DITCH HIS CANOPY AND STRUGGLE OUT.
GOTT IN HIMMEL!


THE HURRICANE PLUNGED THROUGH A HAIL OF FRAGMENTS AS THE Me109 BLEW APART.
OUCH, FEELS AS IF I'VE HIT A BRICK WALL!


DON WAS STILL FLYING, BUT HIS ENGINE WAS OVERHEATING BADLY AND MISSING EVERY OTHER BEAT. HIS RADIO WAS ALSO USELESS, SO HE COULD SEND NO MESSAGE OF THE L.R.D.G. PATROL'S POSITION.
I'LL BE LUCKY TO GET BACK TO THE ARMY PATROL, LET ALONE EL WARRA. THE OLD KITE'S FINISHED THIS TIME...
THE DUEL HAD TAKEN HIM MILES FROM HIS TAKE-OFF POINT.

AS DON NURSED THE CRIPPLED HURRICANE ALONG, HE SAW A CRUMPLED PARACHUTE AHEAD.
MAY AS WELL JOIN BANDY, WE'LL BE COMPANY FOR EACH OTHER...

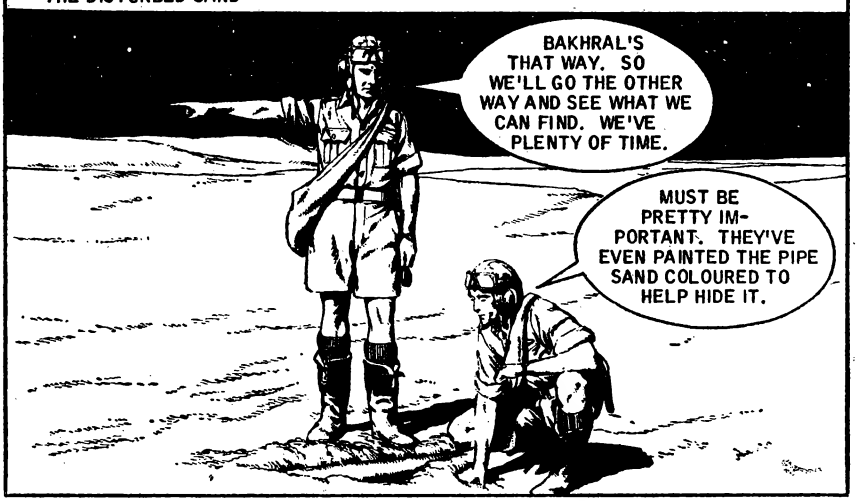

HE WAS ONLY JUST IN TIME, FOR AS HE TOUCHED DOWN THE ENGINE BURST INTO FLAMES.
WELL, AT LEAST I'VE GOT THE EMERGENCY RATIONS!

BANDY GRINNED AS DON APPROACHED.
MIND THAT GRUB, IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT!
TRUST YOU TO THINK OF YOUR STOMACH AT A TIME LIKE THIS!
BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE, FOR THEY HAD FOOD AND WATER AND WERE UNHURT.
WHAT NOW - DO WE FIND THE ARMY BLOKES? IT'LL BE DARK SOON.
FIRST I'D LIKE A LOOK AT THE JERRY PIPELINE. IT ISN'T FAR AWAY...
DON EXPLAINED ABOUT THE MYSTERY PIPELINE, AND SHOWED BANDY HIS MAP.
OK, SO THE LINE LOOKS NEAR TO THE ARMY LOT. BUT HOW DO WE FIND IT IN THE DARK UNDER THE SAND?
EASY. THIS COMPASS WILL DEFLECT WHEN WE CROSS THE METAL PIPE. THERE'S NO OTHER IRON IN THE DESERT!

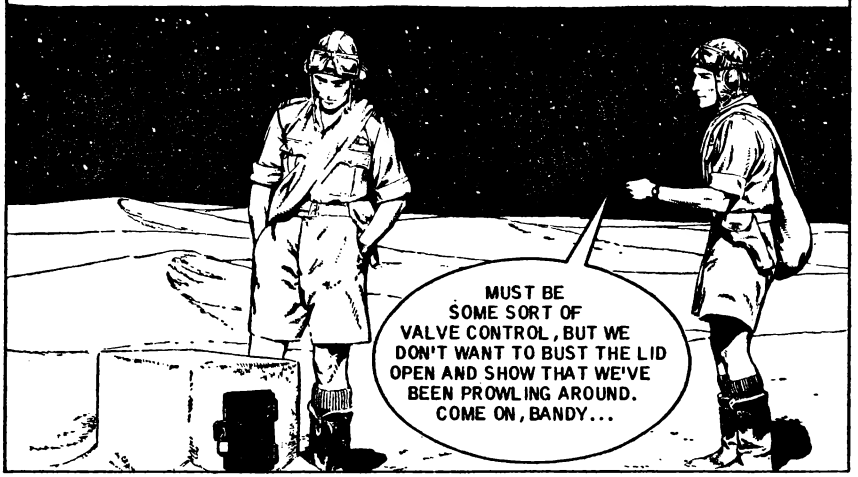
DARKNESS WAS FALLING AS THEY SET OUT, BUT DON'S IDEA WORKED LIKE A CHARM.

WE'VE JUST CROSSED IT, THE NEEDLE SWUNG QUITE DISTINCTLY.
I'VE GOT IT. THEY HAVEN'T BURIED IT VERY DEEPLY. OR MAYBE THE WIND HAS CLEARED THE SAND...

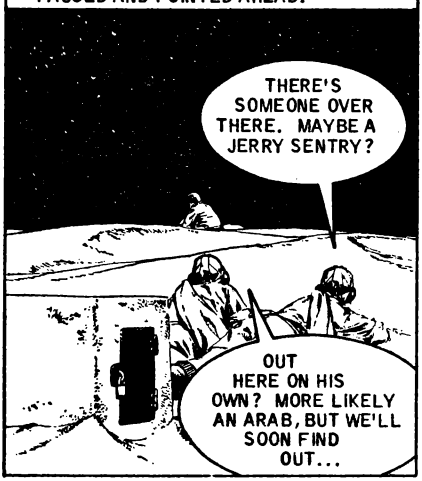
THEY UNCOVERED SUFFICIENT PIPE TO CHECK ITS DIRECTION, AND BEFORE REPLACING THE DISTURBED SAND -


BAKHRAL'S THAT WAY. SO WE'LL GO THE OTHER WAY AND SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND. WE'VE PLENTY OF TIME.
MUST BE PRETTY IM-PORTANT. THEY'VE EVEN PAINTED THE PIPE SAND COLOURED TO HELP HIDE IT.

IN MOST PLACES THE ONLY INDICATION OF THE PIPELINE WAS A SMALL CONCRETE STRUCTURE EVERY TWO OR THREE MILES, BUT THEY FOLLOWED IT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, CHECKING THEIR COURSE WHEREVER THE WIND HAD EXPOSED THE PIPE.

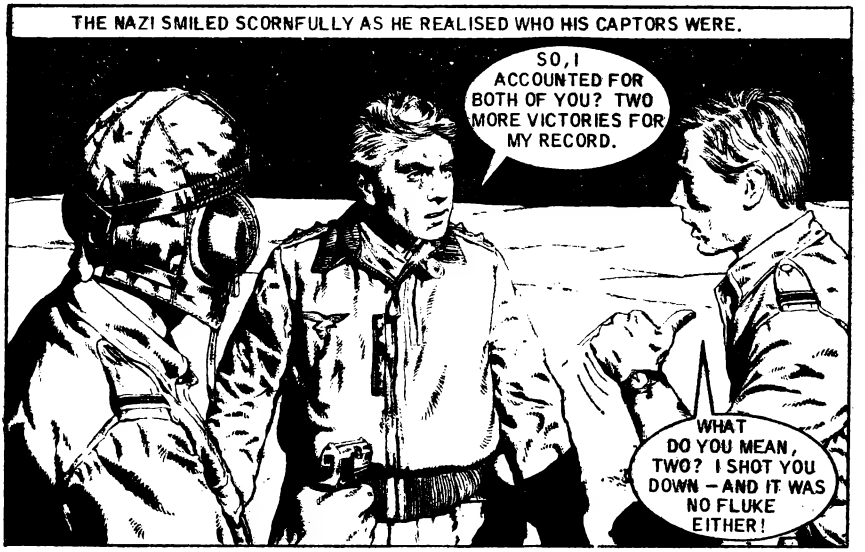

MUST BE SOME SORT OF VALVE CONTROL, BUT WE DON'T WANT TO BUST THE LID OPEN AND SHOW THAT WE'VE BEEN PROWLING AROUND. COME ON, BANDY...

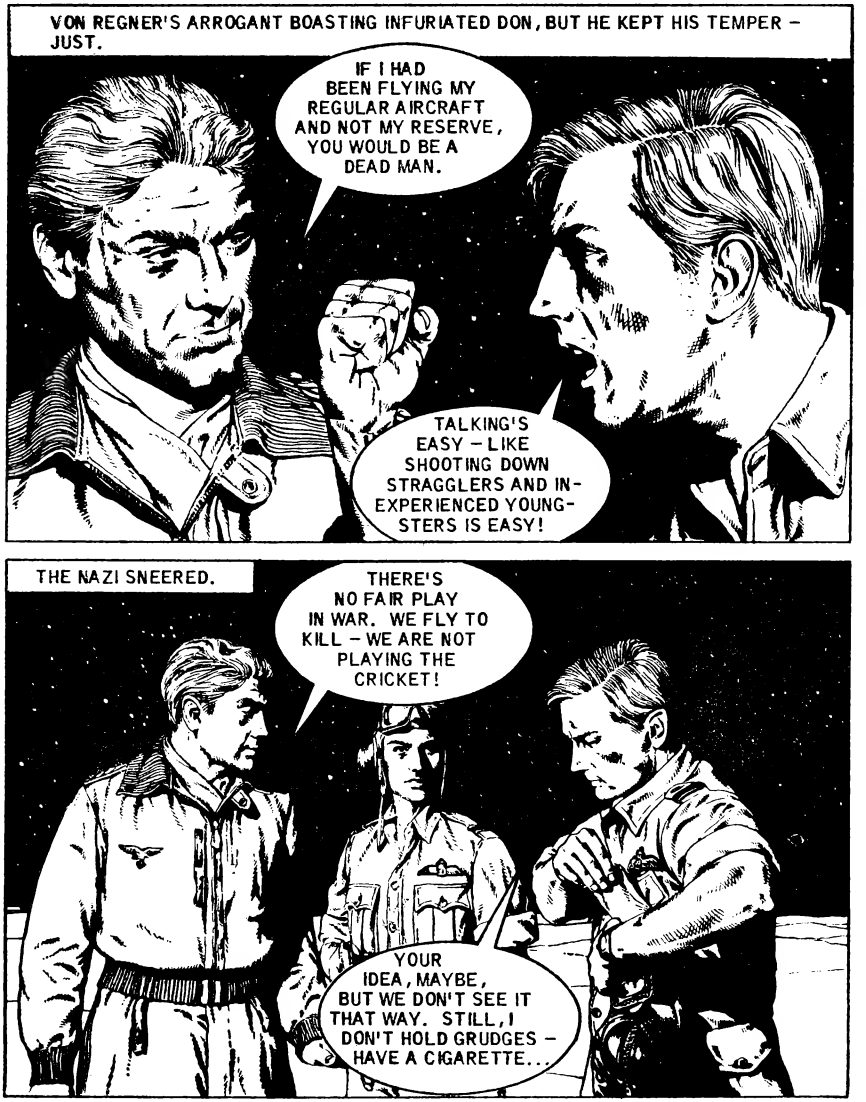
THEN, WHEN THEY HAD BEEN WALKING FOR ANOTHER TWO HOURS, BANDY PAUSED AND POINTED AHEAD.

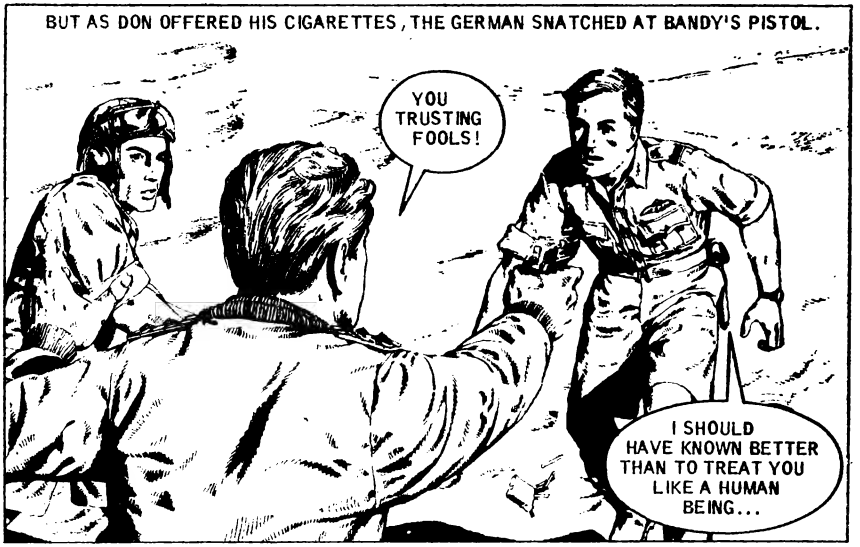


AS THEY DREW CLOSER THEY REALISED THE STRANGER WAS A GERMAN PILOT.

THE GERMAN WAS HALF-ASLEEP, AND THEY WERE ABLE TO POUNCE WITHOUT WARNING.
ACH, HIMMEL...
TAKE IT EASY, CHUM, IT'S NO USE STRUGGLING!

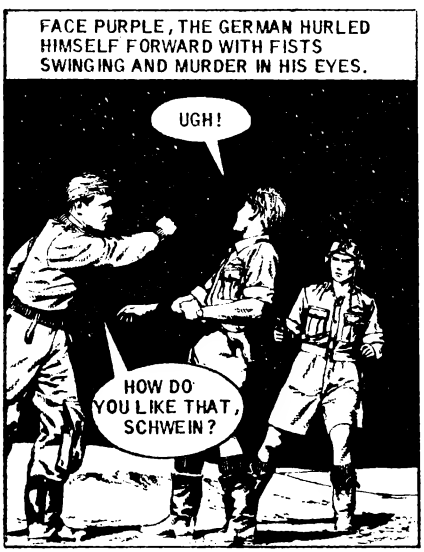

THE NAZI SMILED SCORNFULLY AS HE REALISED WHO HIS CAPTORS WERE.
SO, I ACCOUNTED FOR BOTH OF YOU? TWO MORE VICTORIES FOR MY RECORD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, TWO? I SHOT YOU DOWN – AND IT WAS NO FLUKE EITHER!


VON REGNER'S ARROGANT BOASTING INFURIATED DON, BUT HE KEPT HIS TEMPER – JUST.
IF I HAD BEEN FLYING MY REGULAR AIRCRAFT AND NOT MY RESERVE, YOU WOULD BE A DEAD MAN.
TALKING'S EASY – LIKE SHOOTING DOWN STRAGGLERS AND INEXPERIENCED YOUNGSTERS IS EASY!
THE NAZI SNEERED.
THERE'S NO FAIR PLAY IN WAR. WE FLY TO KILL – WE ARE NOT PLAYING THE CRICKET!
YOUR IDEA, MAYBE, BUT WE DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY. STILL, I DON'T HOLD GRUDGES – HAVE A CIGARETTE...

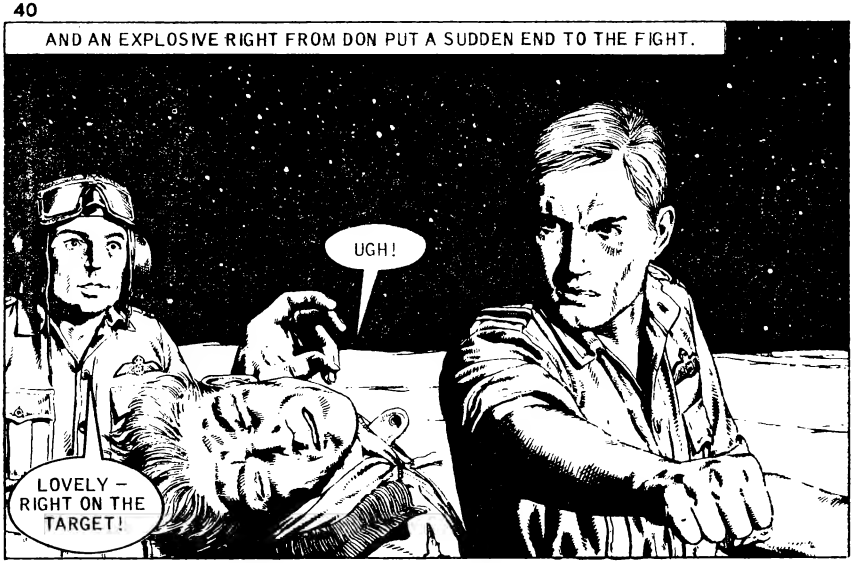

BUT AS DON OFFERED HIS CIGARETTES, THE GERMAN SNATCHED AT BANDY'S PISTOL.
YOU TRUSTING FOOLS!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO TREAT YOU LIKE A HUMAN BEING...

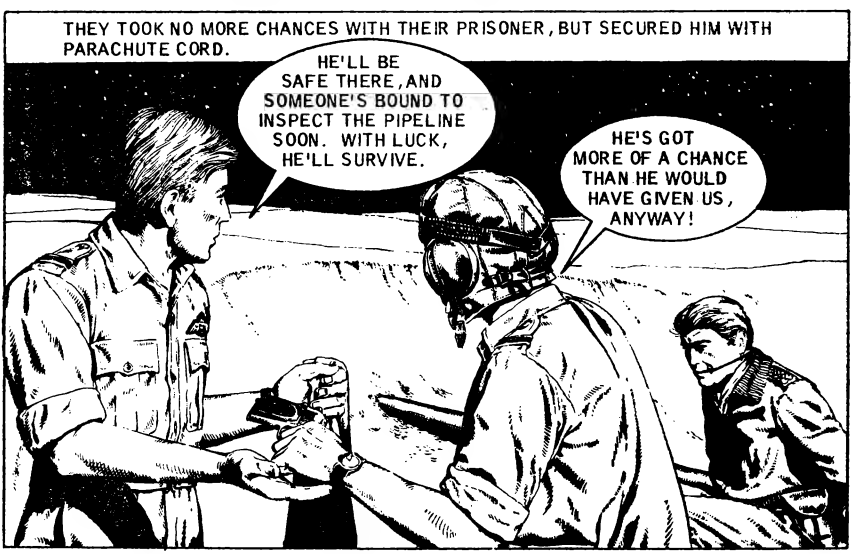
DON HESITATED BRIEFLY, THEN HURLED HIMSELF AT THE GERMAN'S LEGS.
ACH, YOU SCHWEIN!

IN AN INSTANT THE ROLES WERE REVERSED AGAIN.
A PISTOL MAKES A MAN BRAVE, ENGLANDER. GO AHEAD, SHOOT ME – THAT WILL MAKE YOU A REAL HERO!
WHERE I COME FROM WE DON'T SHOOT RATS – WE STAMP ON THEM!


FACE PURPLE, THE GERMAN HURLED HIMSELF FORWARD WITH FISTS SWINGING AND MURDER IN HIS EYES.
UGH!
HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT, SCHWEIN?

THEY SLUGGED IT OUT STANDING TOE TO TOE – AND THE GERMAN SOON BEGAN TO TIRE.
YOU'VE GOT HIM, DON!


AND AN EXPLOSIVE RIGHT FROM DON PUT A SUDDEN END TO THE FIGHT.
UGH!
LOVELY – RIGHT ON THE TARGET!


THEY TOOK NO MORE CHANCES WITH THEIR PRISONER, BUT SECURED HIM WITH PARACHUTE CORD.
HE'LL BE SAFE THERE, AND SOMEONE'S BOUND TO INSPECT THE PIPELINE SOON. WITH LUCK, HE'LL SURVIVE.
HE'S GOT MORE OF A CHANCE THAN HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN US, ANYWAY!

LEAVING VON REGNER TO TAKE HIS CHANCE, THEY TRUDGED ON ALONG THE PIPELINE.

HOW MUCH FURTHER ARE WE GOING? WE'LL NEED TO HIDE UP BEFORE DAYLIGHT.

WE'RE STILL HEADING ROUGHLY TOWARDS THE ARMY BLOKES, SO WE'LL PUSH ON FOR ANOTHER HOUR OR SO...

AN HOUR OR TWO BEFORE DAWN, THEIR PERSISTENCE PAID OFF, FOR THEY SIGHTED THEIR OBJECTIVE.

BLIMEY, A FACTORY! WHAT'S THAT DOING HERE?

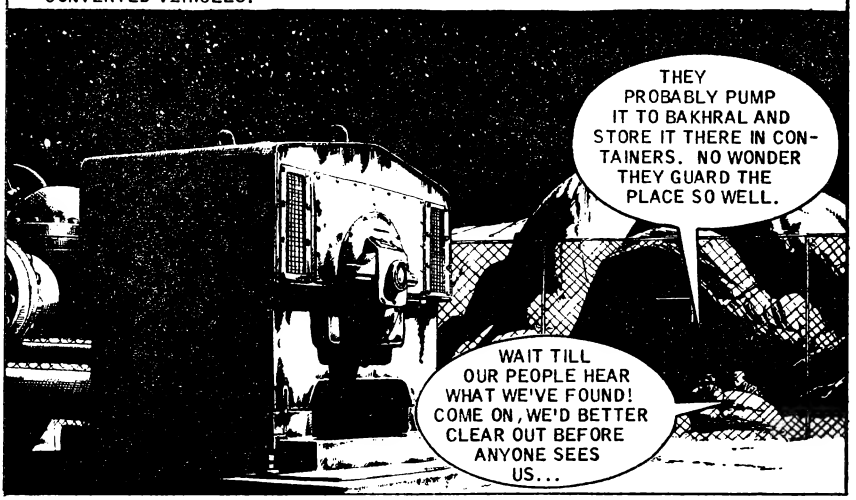
NO, IT'S SOME SORT OF WELL AND PUMPING STATION. MUST BE THE MAIN WATER SUPPLY FOR BAKHRAL.

BUT AS THEY APPROACHED CAUTIOUSLY, BANDY POINTED TO A WARNING NOTICE.

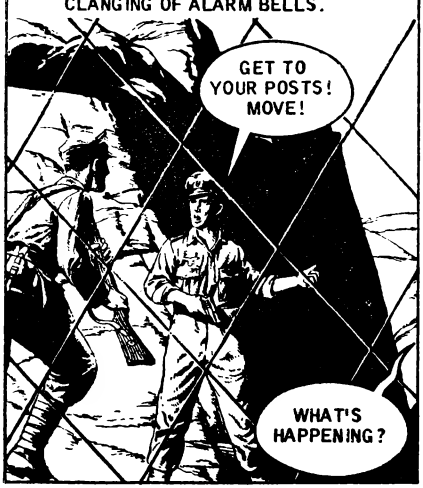
BANDY HAD BEEN AN ENGINEERING STUDENT BEFORE THE WAR, AND HE SOON REALISED THE TRUTH.

THEY'RE NOT PUMPING WATER! THIS PLACE IS SOME SORT OF GAS WELL – THEY'VE TAPPED THE NATURAL GAS UNDER THE SAND!
SO THAT EXPLAINS THE ODD SMELL IN THE AIR! BUT HOW CAN THEY USE THE STUFF?

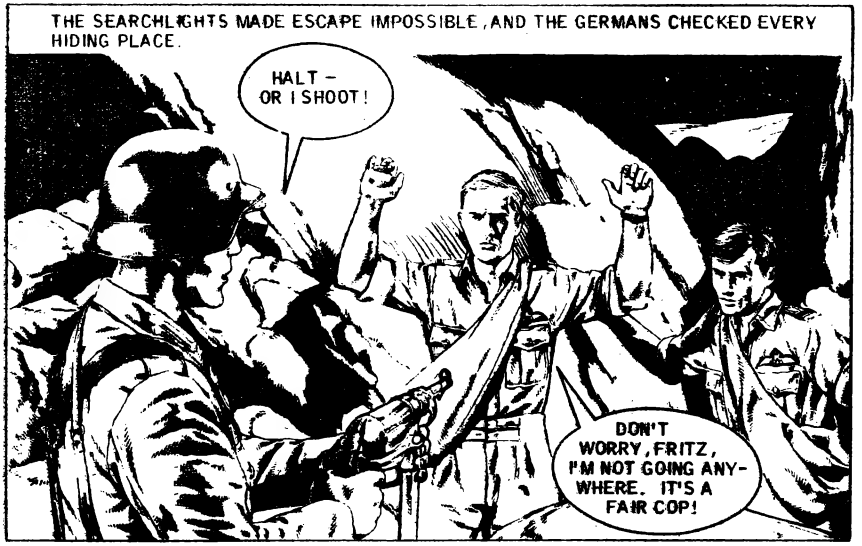
BANDY EXPLAINED THAT THE GAS COULD BE USED INSTEAD OF PETROL IN SPECIALLY CONVERTED VEHICLES.


THEY PROBABLY PUMP IT TO BAKHRAL AND STORE IT THERE IN CONTAINERS. NO WONDER THEY GUARD THE PLACE SO WELL.
WAIT TILL OUR PEOPLE HEAR WHAT WE'VE FOUND! COME ON, WE'D BETTER CLEAR OUT BEFORE ANYONE SEES US...

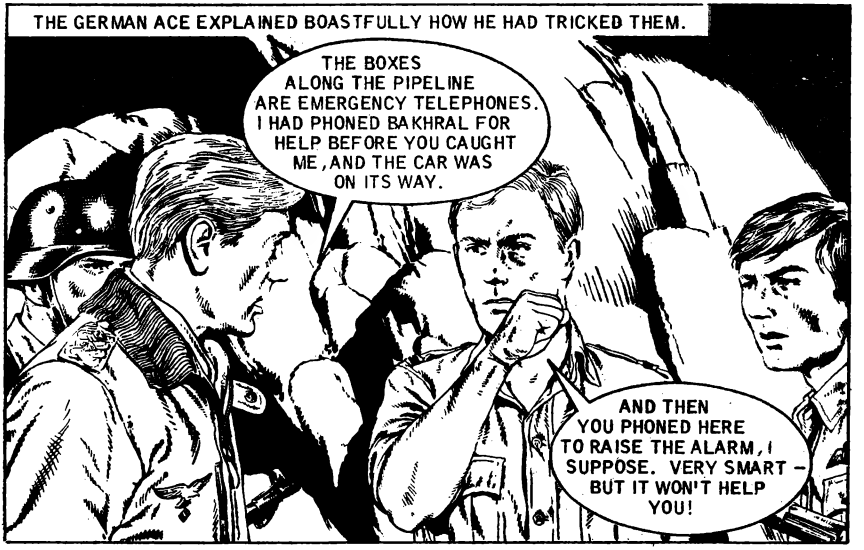
BUT AS THEY MOVED CAUTIOUSLY AWAY, THERE WAS A FURIOUS CLANGING OF ALARM BELLS.

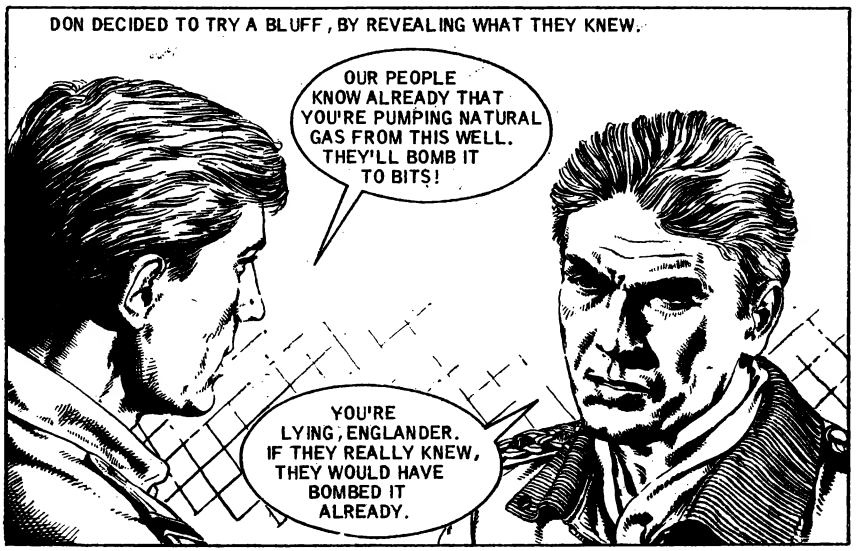


SEARCHLIGHTS SWEPT THE AREA AS THE GERMANS BEGAN A CAREFUL SEARCH.

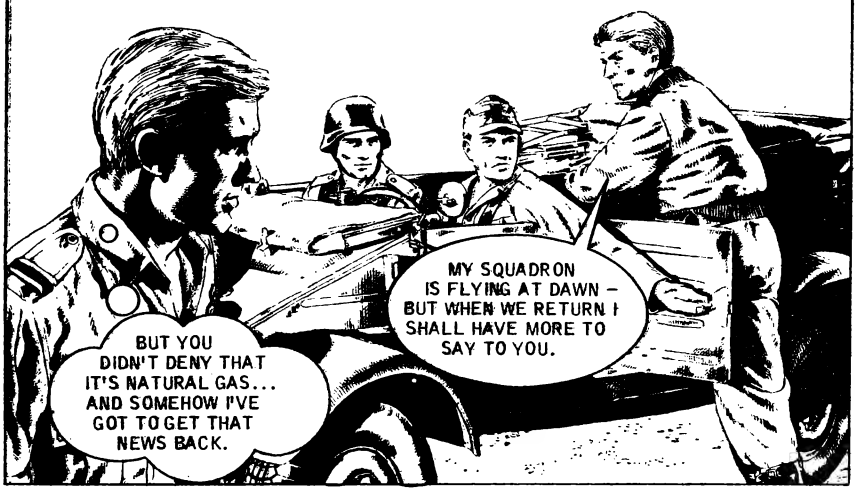

THE SEARCHLIGHTS MADE ESCAPE IMPOSSIBLE, AND THE GERMANS CHECKED EVERY HIDING PLACE.
HALT – OR I SHOOT!
DON'T WORRY, FRITZ, I'M NOT GOING ANY-WHERE. IT'S A FAIR COP!

AS THEIR CAPTORS SURROUNDED THEM A KUBELWAGEN APPROACHED – AND OUT STEPPED VON REGNER!
SO, SCHWEIN! YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD BEATEN ME, HEIN?
OUCH!

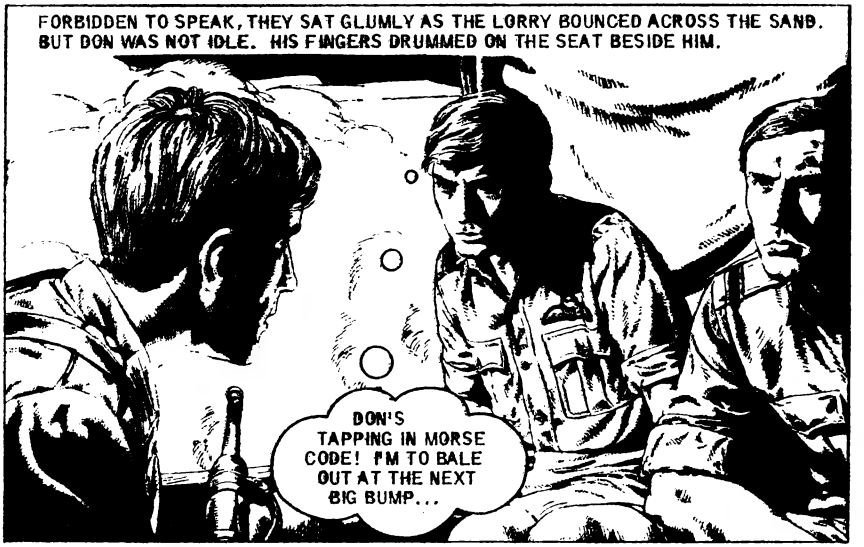

THE GERMAN ACE EXPLAINED BOASTFULLY HOW HE HAD TRICKED THEM.
THE BOXES ALONG THE PIPELINE ARE EMERGENCY TELEPHONES. I HAD PHONED BAKHRAL FOR HELP BEFORE YOU CAUGHT ME, AND THE CAR WAS ON ITS WAY.
AND THEN YOU PHONED HERE TO RAISE THE ALARM, I SUPPOSE. VERY SMART – BUT IT WON'T HELP YOU!

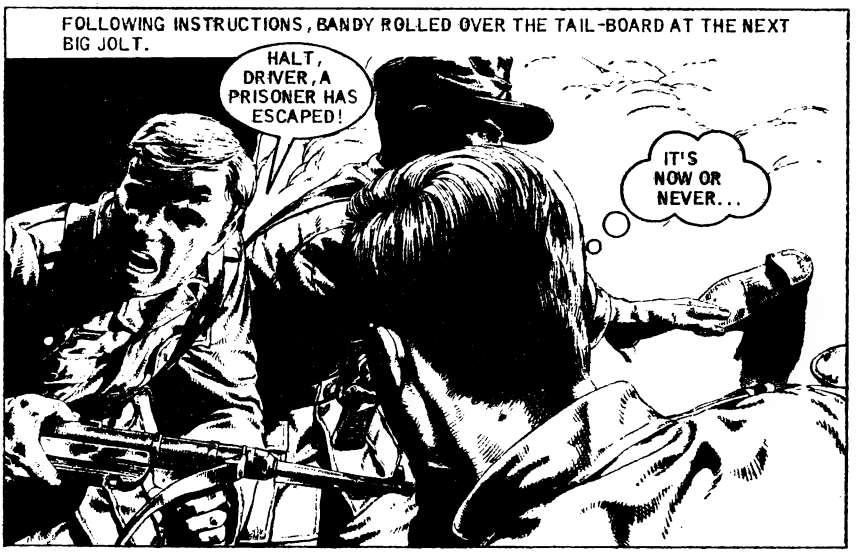

DON DECIDED TO TRY A BLUFF, BY REVEALING WHAT THEY KNEW.
OUR PEOPLE KNOW ALREADY THAT YOU'RE PUMPING NATURAL GAS FROM THIS WELL. THEY'LL BOMB IT TO BITS!
YOU'RE LYING, ENGLANDER. IF THEY REALLY KNEW, THEY WOULD HAVE BOMBED IT ALREADY.

VON REGNER TURNED AWAY SCORNFULLY, WITHOUT REALISING THAT HE HAD CONFIRMED DON'S SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE PIPELINE.


MY SQUADRON IS FLYING AT DAWN – BUT WHEN WE RETURN I SHALL HAVE MORE TO SAY TO YOU.
BUT YOU DIDN'T DENY THAT IT'S NATURAL GAS... AND SOMEHOW I'VE GOT TO GET THAT NEWS BACK.

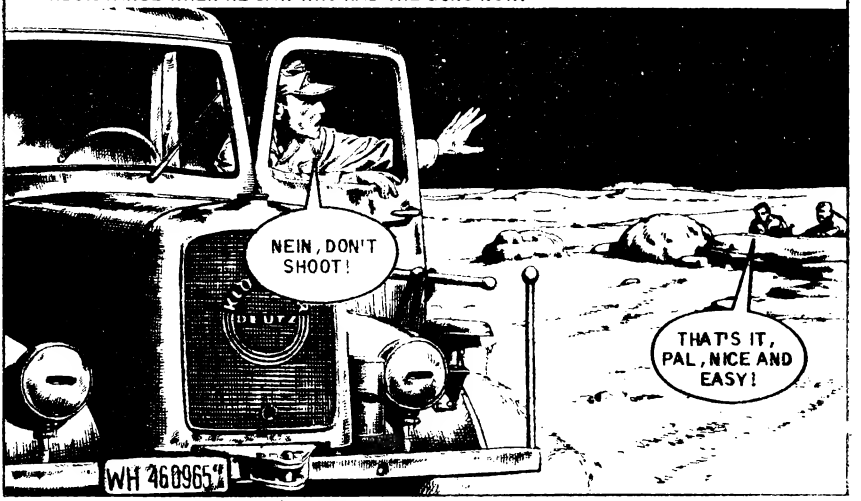
AS THE VEHICLE ROARED AWAY DON AND BANDY WERE BUNDLED INTO A LORRY WITH TWO GUARDS.


FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK, THEY SAT GLUMLY AS THE LORRY BOUNCED ACROSS THE SAND. BUT DON WAS NOT IDLE. HIS FINGERS DRUMMED ON THE SEAT BESIDE HIM.
DON'S TAPPING IN MORSE CODE! I'M TO BALE OUT AT THE NEXT BIG BUMP...

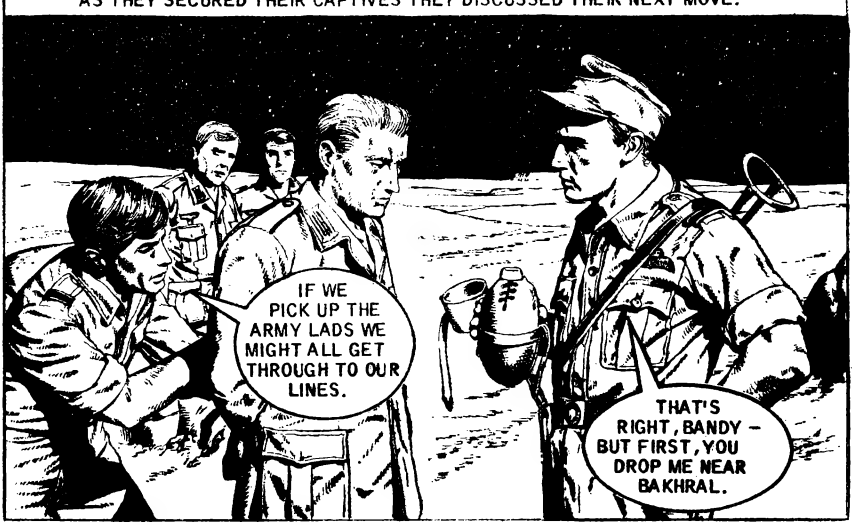

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS, BANDY ROLLED OVER THE TAIL-BOARD AT THE NEXT BIG JOLT.
HALT, DRIVER, A PRISONER HAS ESCAPED!
IT'S NOW OR NEVER...

FOOLISHLY THE GUARDS TURNED THEIR BACKS ON HIM. DON LEAPT INTO ACTION, SWEEPING THEM OUT OF THE LORRY.
LET'S HOPE BANDY IS STILL FIGHTING FIT.
AAAGHHH!
AS THE THREE MEN CRASHED HEAVILY TO THE GROUND, BANDY RUSHED FORWARD TO ASSIST, HIS FISTS FLYING.
I LANDED ON THIS ONE AND HE'S OUT COLD. GRAB THEIR GUNS, BANDY!
AAGH!

THE LORRY DRIVER, RETURNING UNSUSPECTINGLY FOR THE GUARDS, OFFERED NO RESISTANCE WHEN HE SAW WHO HAD THE GUNS NOW.



AS THEY SECURED THEIR CAPTIVES THEY DISCUSSED THEIR NEXT MOVE.



DON EXPLAINED THAT HE INTENDED TO TRY AND STEAL AN AIRCRAFT. BANDY WAS AMAZED.

YOU'RE CRAZY! EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT CAUGHT, YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO START THE JERRY KITE!

REGNER SAID THEY WERE FLYING AT DAWN, SO THEY'LL BE WARMING UP. AND IT'S THE QUICKEST WAY TO GET OUR NEWS BACK TO BASE.

BANDY TOOK A LOT OF CONVINCING — BUT EVENTUALLY HE AGREED, AND DROVE DON TO BAKHRAL.

BETTER GET A MOVE ON. THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT TO DAWN...

THE AIRSTRIP WAS POORLY GUARDED, FOR THE DESERT OFFERED LITTLE COVER FOR ATTACKERS.

GOOD JOB THE MORNINGS START MISTY — AND NOBODY SEEMS VERY WIDE-AWAKE.

AS HE NEARED THE DISPERSALS DON HEARD THE FIGHTER ENGINES BURST INTO LIFE.

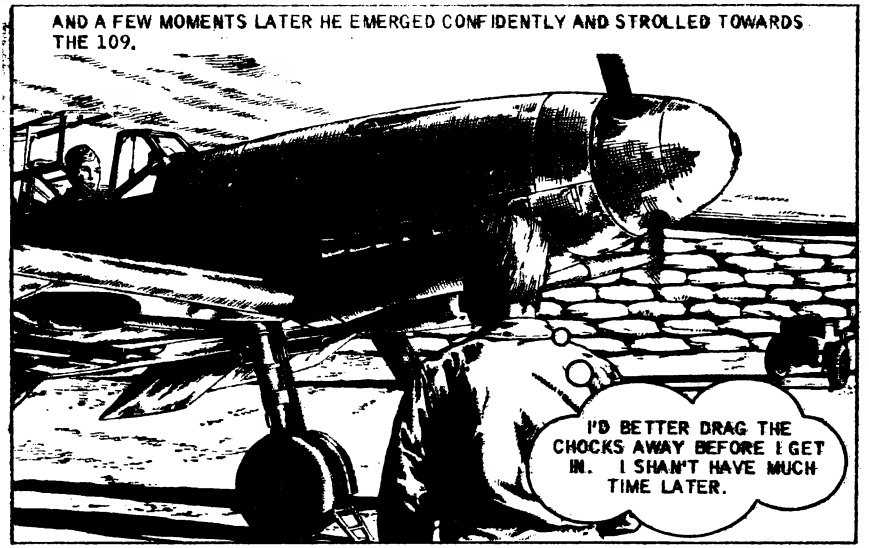
I'LL NEED SOME OVERALLS AS A DISGUISE, AND THE PILOTS WILL SOON BE HERE, SO I'D BETTER GET A MOVE ON...

A MECHANIC WHO HAD SNEAKED INTO A HUT FOR A FURTIVE SMOKE GOT AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE.

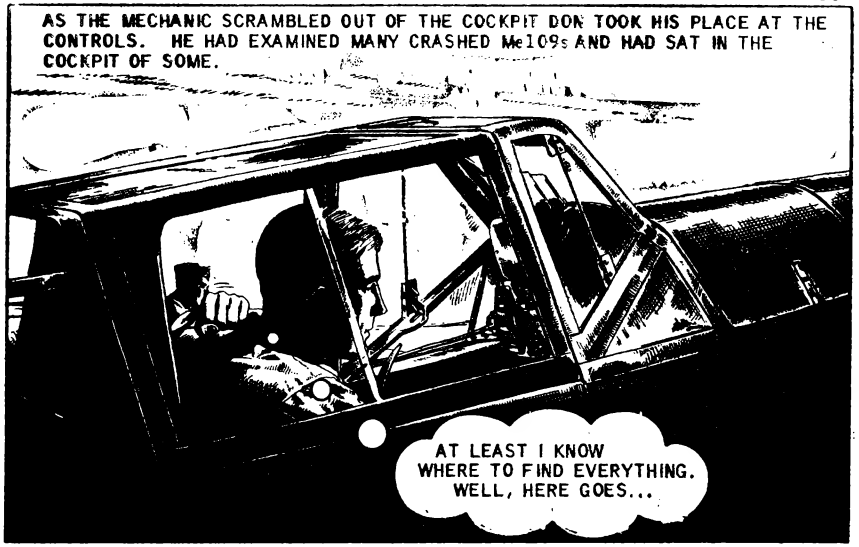
SORRY ABOUT THIS, CHUM, BUT I NEED YOUR OVERALLS...

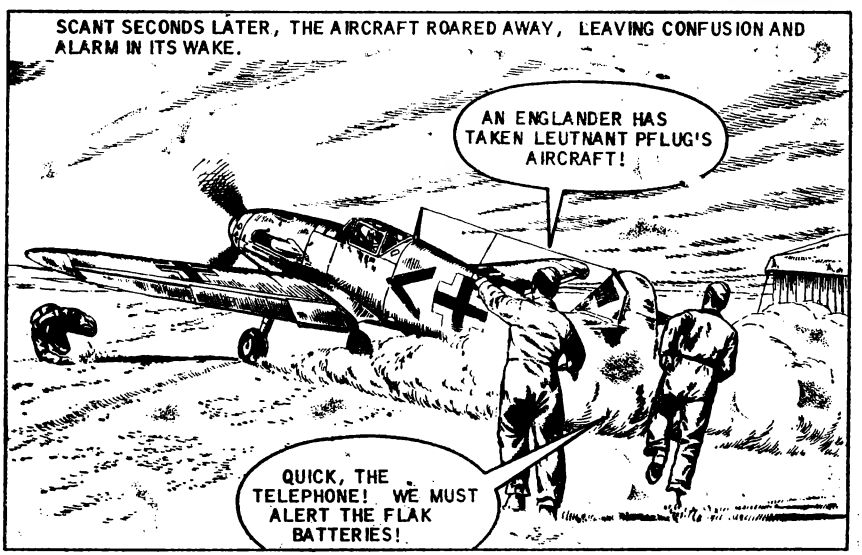
THE MAN DROPPED, POLE-AXED. DON DRAGGED ON HIS OVERALLS, THEN -

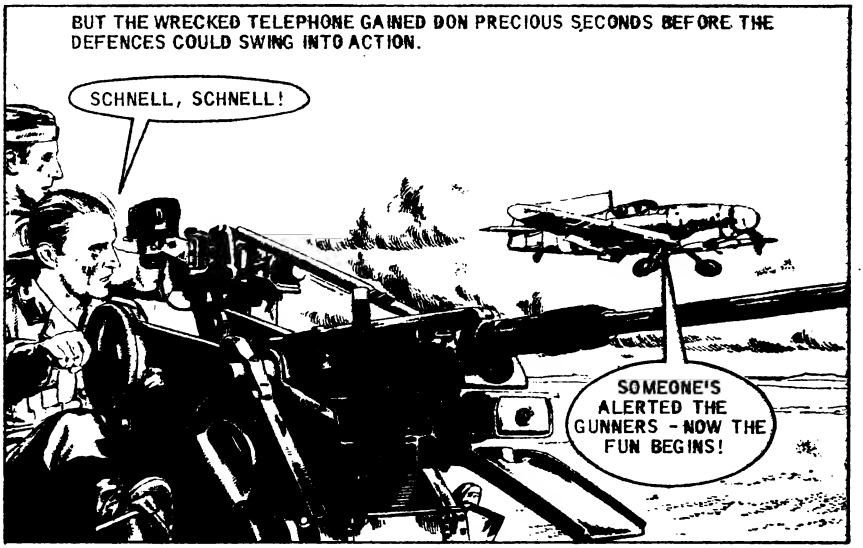
NOT A BAD IDEA TO HAVE THE PHONE DUD AS WELL...

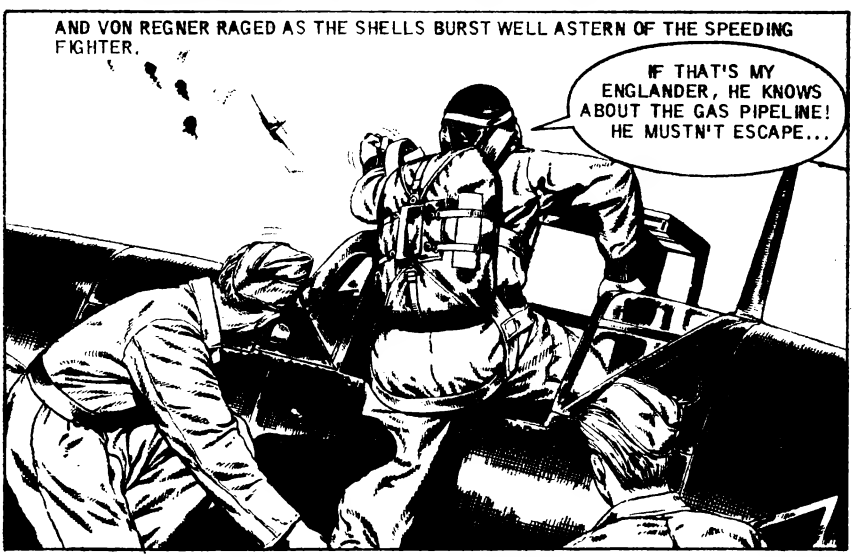

AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER HE EMERGED CONFIDENTLY AND STROLLED TOWARDS THE 109.
I'D BETTER DRAG THE CHOCKS AWAY BEFORE I GET IN. I SHAN'T HAVE MUCH TIME LATER.

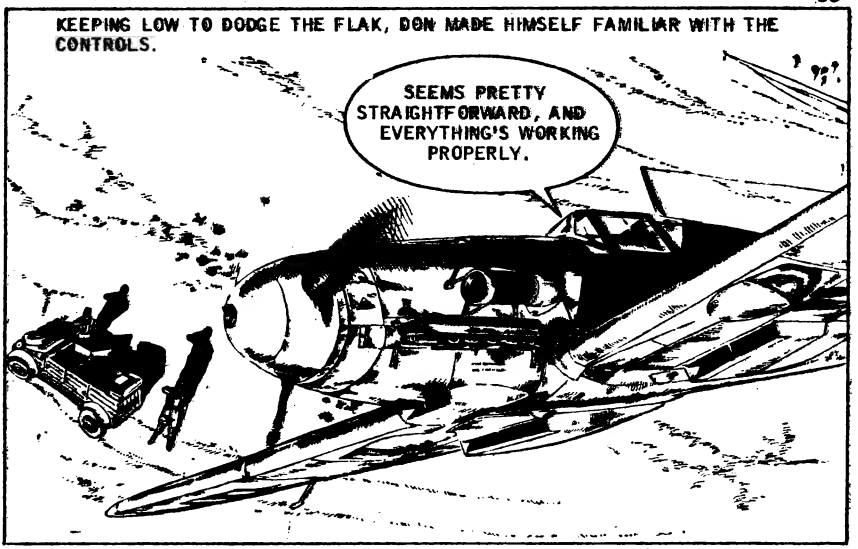
AFTER REMOVING THE CHOCKS HE CLIMBED CASUALLY ON THE WING. WHAT HE DID NEXT WASN'T SO CASUAL.
OUT YOU GET! HERAUS — SCHNELL!
ACH, HIMMEL!


AS THE MECHANIC SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE COCKPIT DON TOOK HIS PLACE AT THE CONTROLS. HE HAD EXAMINED MANY CRASHED Me109s AND HAD SAT IN THE COCKPIT OF SOME.
AT LEAST I KNOW WHERE TO FIND EVERYTHING. WELL, HERE GOES...

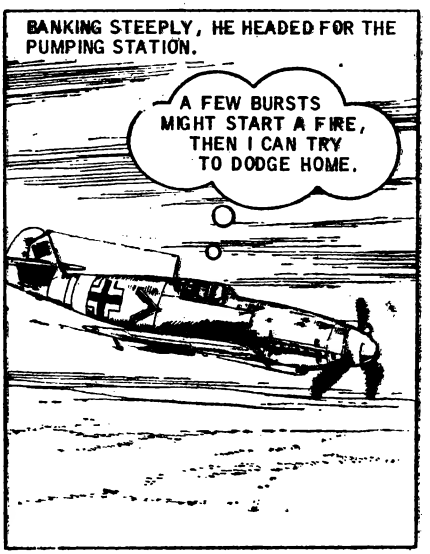

SCANT SECONDS LATER, THE AIRCRAFT ROARED AWAY, LEAVING CONFUSION AND ALARM IN ITS WAKE.
AN ENGLANDER HAS TAKEN LEUTNANT PFLUG'S AIRCRAFT!
QUICK, THE TELEPHONE! WE MUST ALERT THE FLAK BATTERIES!

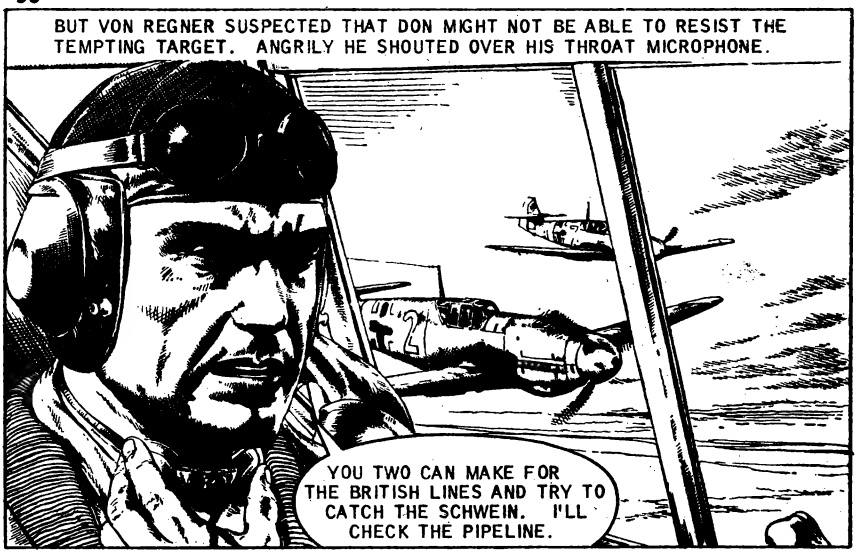

BUT THE WRECKED TELEPHONE GAINED DON PRECIOUS SECONDS BEFORE THE DEFENCES COULD SWING INTO ACTION.
SCHNELL, SCHNELL!
SOMEONE'S ALERTED THE GUNNERS - NOW THE FUN BEGINS!


AND VON REGNER RAGED AS THE SHELLS BURST WELL ASTERN OF THE SPEEDING FIGHTER.
IF THAT'S MY ENGLANDER, HE KNOWS ABOUT THE GAS PIPELINE! HE MUSTN'T ESCAPE...


KEEPING LOW TO DODGE THE FLAK, DON MADE HIMSELF FAMILIAR WITH THE CONTROLS.
SEEMS PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD, AND EVERYTHING'S WORKING PROPERLY.

MINUTES LATER HE SAW PURSUING PLANES BEHIND HIM. SUDDENLY HE HAD AN IDEA.
HERE THEY COME - BUT THE PUMPING STATION ISN'T FAR AWAY...


BANKING STEEPLY, HE HEADED FOR THE PUMPING STATION.
A FEW BURSTS MIGHT START A FIRE, THEN I CAN TRY TO DODGE HOME.


BUT VON REGNER SUSPECTED THAT DON MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST THE TEMPTING TARGET. ANGRILY HE SHOUTED OVER HIS THROAT MICROPHONE.
YOU TWO CAN MAKE FOR THE BRITISH LINES AND TRY TO CATCH THE SCHWEIN. I'LL CHECK THE PIPELINE.

MEANWHILE DON HAD SIGHTED HIS TARGET - AND BEGAN HIS ATTACK!
IT'S ONE OF OURS - BUT HE MUST BE EITHER DRUNK OR MAD!

AS HE RAKED THE BUILDINGS WITH CANNON FIRE, FLAMES BURST FROM A DAMAGED GAS VALVE.....
AAGHH, RUN!

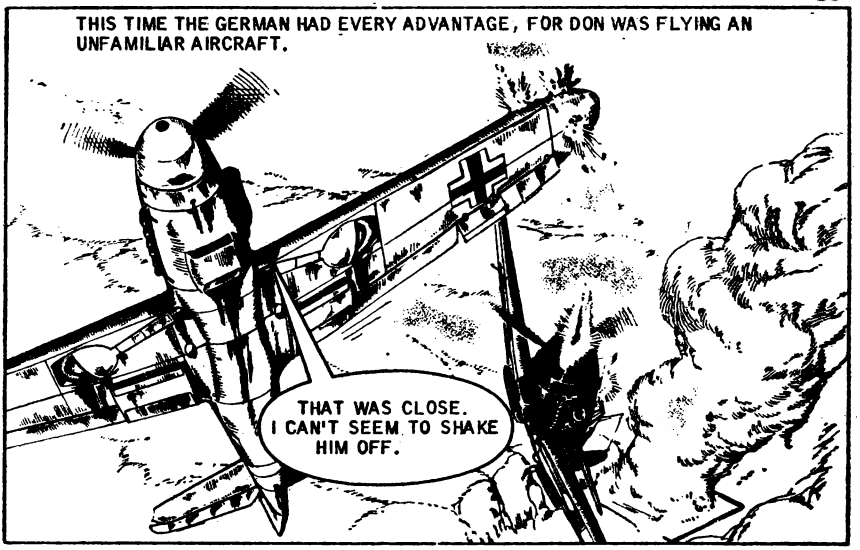
AND A MOMENT LATER A VIOLENT EXPLOSION SHATTERED THE PUMPING STATION.
BETTER THAN I EXPECTED - BUT THAT SMOKE WILL ATTRACT ATTENTION...

VON REGNER WAS JUST IN TIME TO WITNESS THE EXPLOSION—AND TO SEE DON MAKING HIS ESCAPE.

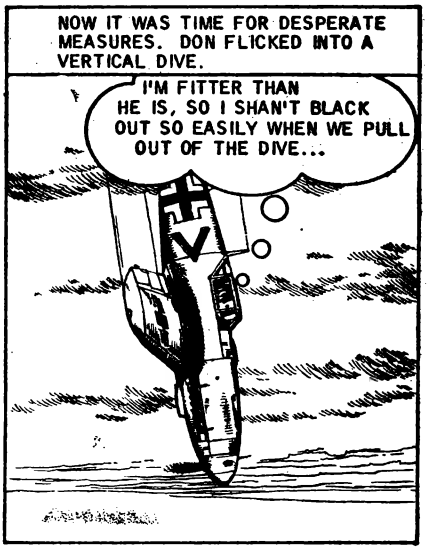
VERDAMMT! TOO LATE - BUT I CAN STILL SETTLE WITH THE ENGLANDER.

BUT DON, AS ALWAYS, WAS WATCHING HIS REAR-VIEW MIRROR AND SAW THE DANGER.

IT'S THE BLACK BUZZARD IN PERSON. I'VE GOT A FIGHT ON MY HANDS NOW, BY CRIKEY!


THIS TIME THE GERMAN HAD EVERY ADVANTAGE, FOR DON WAS FLYING AN UNFAMILIAR AIRCRAFT.
THAT WAS CLOSE. I CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE HIM OFF.

AND THE NAZI AGREED.
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, ENGLANDER. MINE IS THE BEST MACHINE IN THE SQUADRON!

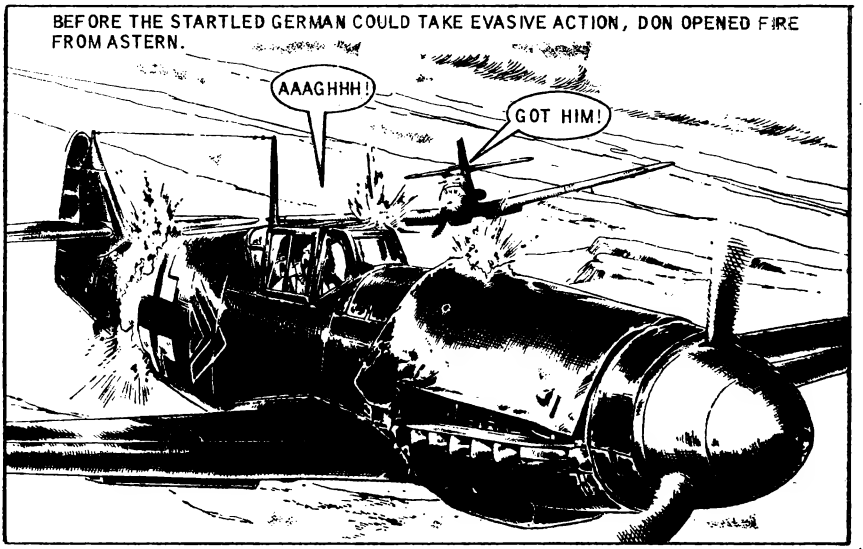

NOW IT WAS TIME FOR DESPERATE MEASURES. DON FLICKED INTO A VERTICAL DIVE.
I'M FITTER THAN HE IS, SO I SHAN'T BLACK OUT SO EASILY WHEN WE PULL OUT OF THE DIVE...

RISKING EVERYTHING ON ONE GAMBLE, DON PULLED OUT WITH BRUTAL FORCE. THE AIRCRAFT SHUDDERED UNDER THE STRAIN AS HE FOUGHT AGAINST UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND BEGAN TO TURN, HOPING THE GERMAN WOULD NOT BE ALERT ENOUGH TO FOLLOW...

... CAN'T SEE... EVERYTHING'S GOING GREY... BUT HE'S PROBABLY FEELING WORSE.

AND AS HE HAD HOPED, VON REGNER PULLED OUT WITHOUT TURNING AND DREW AHEAD.

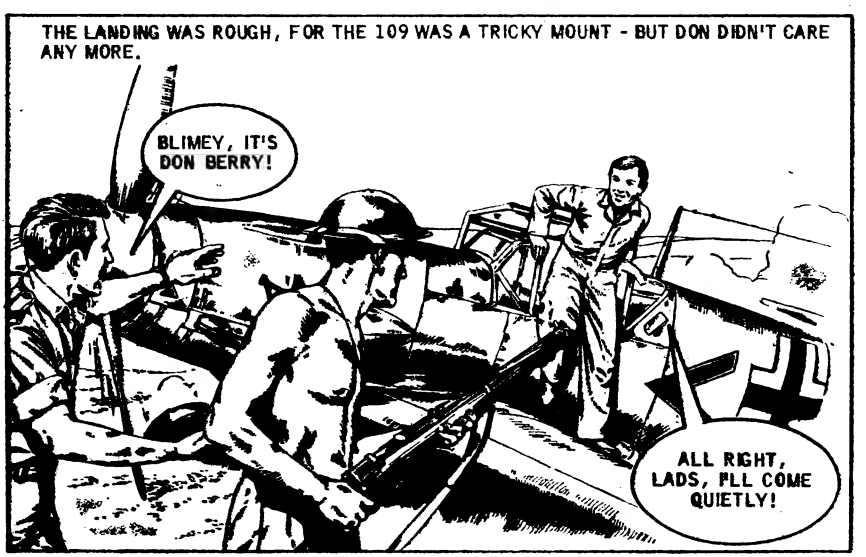
ACH, I'VE LOST HIM! WHERE DID HE GO?

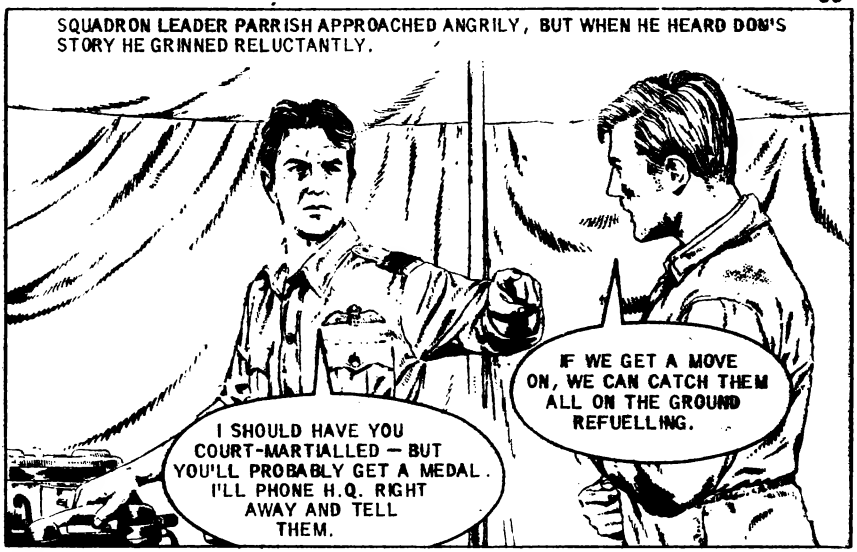

BEFORE THE STARTLED GERMAN COULD TAKE EVASIVE ACTION, DON OPENED FIRE FROM ASTERN.
AAAGHHH!
GOT HIM!

THE BLACK 109 EXPLODED LIKE A BOMB, HURLING FRAGMENTS ACROSS THE SKY.
THIS TIME HE DIDN'T BALE OUT!

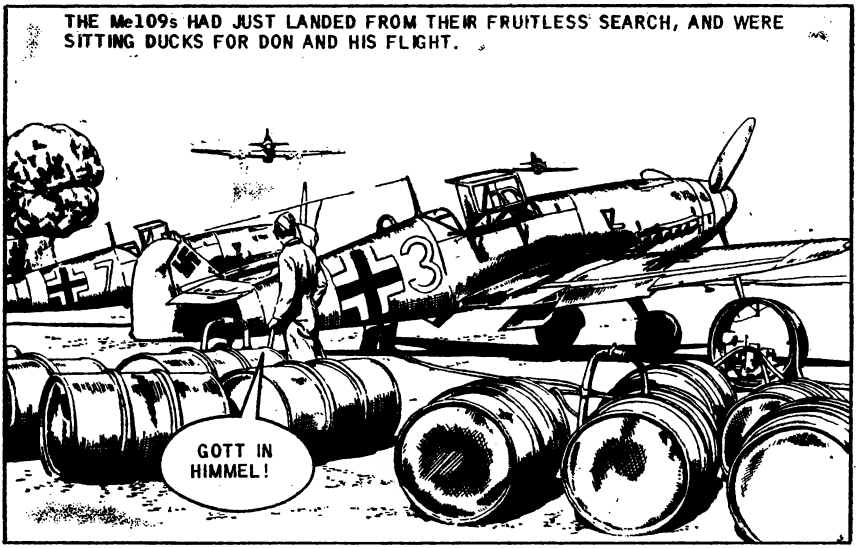
DESCENDING TO ALMOST GROUND LEVEL DON HEADED FOR EL WARRA.
LOOKS AS IF I'VE DODGED VON REGNER'S PALS. LET'S HOPE I DON'T MEET ANY HURRICANES!

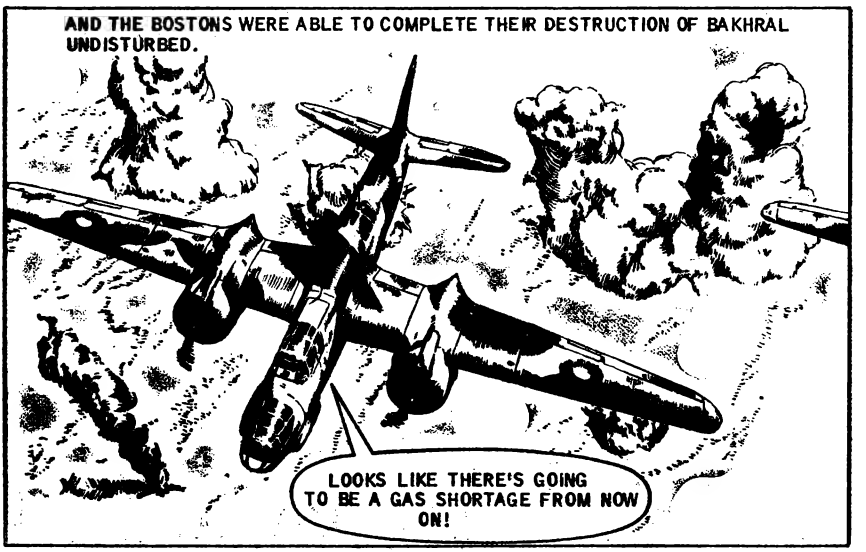
LUCK WAS WITH HIM, AND HE REACHED EL WARRA WITHOUT BEING INTERCEPTED.
HOLD YOUR FIRE, HE'S TRYING TO SURRENDER!


THE LANDING WAS ROUGH, FOR THE 109 WAS A TRICKY MOUNT - BUT DON DIDN'T CARE ANY MORE.
BLIMEY, IT'S DON BERRY!
ALL RIGHT, LADS, I'LL COME QUIETLY!


SQUADRON LEADER PARRISH APPROACHED ANGRILY, BUT WHEN HE HEARD DON'S STORY HE GRINNED RELUCTANTLY.
I SHOULD HAVE YOU COURT-MARTIALLED — BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY GET A MEDAL. I'LL PHONE H.Q. RIGHT AWAY AND TELL THEM.
IF WE GET A MOVE ON, WE CAN CATCH THEM ALL ON THE GROUND REFUELLING.

THE CHANCE WAS TOO GOOD TO MISS, SO A BOMBING RAID WAS ORGANISED, AND DON MADE SURE HE WAS IN ON IT TOO...
BLIMEY, HAVEN'T YOU DONE ENOUGH FLYIN' FOR TODAY, SIR?
NOT ME, CHUM. THIS TRIP'S GOING TO BE A PLEASURE!


THE Me109s HAD JUST LANDED FROM THEIR FRUITLESS SEARCH, AND WERE SITTING DUCKS FOR DON AND HIS FLIGHT.
GOTT IN HIMMEL!


AND THE BOSTONS WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR DESTRUCTION OF BAKHRAL UNDISTURBED.
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S GOING TO BE A GAS SHORTAGE FROM NOW ON!

ON THE WAY HOME, WITH THE C.O.'s PERMISSION, DON BROKE AWAY FOR A SPECIAL TASK.

AND DON'S MESSAGE THAT HELP WAS ON THE WAY CHEERED BANDY AND THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMY PATROL AS THEY BEGAN THEIR LONG JOURNEY HOME.

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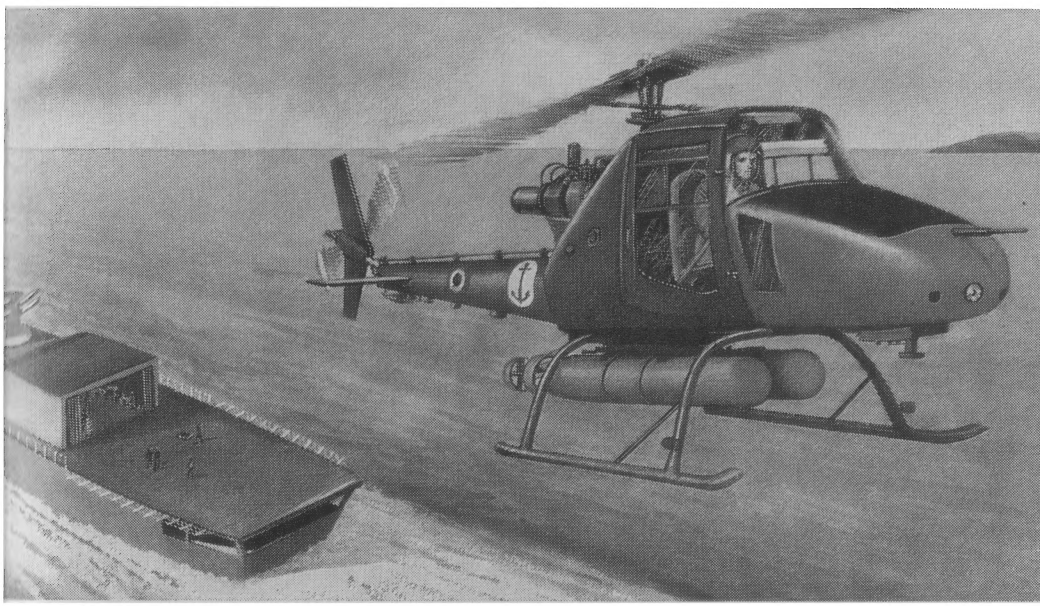

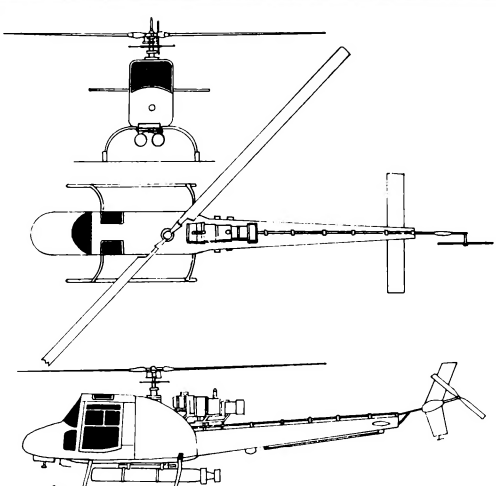

No. 15 AGUSTA A. 106

SINGLE-SEAT light Italian-built helicopter. Designed for anti-submarine attack duties, carries 2 Mk44 homing torpedoes. Power plant, one Turboméca-Agusta TAA 230 engine. Max speed of 110mph. Endurance, with external tanks, 460 miles.

THE BLACK BUZZARD

SLOWLY, painfully, the three R.A.F. Hurricanes staggered through the desert sky, desperately striving to reach home and safety.

The wreck in the middle had a wounded pilot slumped over its controls, as near unconsciousness as makes no difference, and all that held his tattered plane in the air was the wingtips of his comrades' planes on either side.

Yard by yard they struggled on, grimly, gallantly—then came the sinister chatter of cannons and machine-guns behind them. The Black Buzzard had arrived for the kill . . .

Commando